A PEEP

AT THE

THEATRES!

AND

BIRD'S-EYE VIEWS OF MEN

IN

THE JUBILEE YEAR!

A NOVEL,

Satirical, Critical, and Moral,

IN THREE VOLUMES;

BY AN OLD NAVAL OFFICER.

VOL. I.

"He who runs may read!"

LONDON:

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TO

THE GLORIOUS PRINCE,

WHO NOBLY DARES TO INSTRUCT

THE FUTURE RULER

OF

A MIGHTY EMPIRE,

IN THE WISDOM AND VIRTUE OF

A PATRIOT QUEEN!

THESE VOLUMES, A GRATEFUL TRIBUTE

TO HIS GODLIKE RESOLVES,

ARE MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE SUBSCRIBERS.

THE Author, with the most profound respect, and perfect gratitude, begs leave to make his unfeigned thanks to his Royal, Noble, and Generous, Friends, for the advance of their Subscriptions, so liberally contributed, in aid of the following Work. Indeed it was not to be expected, that, on the scanty pittance of his pension for the loss of a limb—twelve pounds a-year, only! a person could pay those

frequent attendances at the various theatres, to investigate the merits of the several pieces, and performers, alluded to in these volumes, (which an attempt of so arduous and delicate a nature rendered absolutely indispensible), without pecuniary assistance; therefore, though an application for a previous subscription, might have been deemed somewhat presuming, a whisper to the humanity of his benevolent Friends was distinctly heard, and his humble request most cheerfully complied with: for which high indulgence he will ever feel himself equally honoured, gratified, and obliged.

The Author ventures to assure his Royal, Noble, and Generous, Friends, that

the smallness of the List of Subscribers is solely to be attributed to the paucity of his applications—not to any want of liberality in a Nation so proverbially famed for benevolence throughout the universe. He candidly confesses, that he did not appeal to more than thirty, in addition to this List, on the subject; and, of those, the major part kindly ordered copies; though, from absence, and various other causes, the subscriptions were not paid in advance. In fact, the reason for not making his early applications more numerous, owed its origin to an ardent desire that the work should be in a state of actual progress through the press, before a general effort was made: and a series of disappointments, for nearly twelve

months, preventing such event from taking place, presented an apparent impropriety, after so long a delay, which also prevented him from being further troublesome.

Nor was the injurious effect of such series of disappointments, confined to the Author's List of Subscribers only; for, as some parts of the work were evidently written to the very day, the few satirical hits so levelled, must experience material diminution of effect in their *range;* while the retrospective scenes, by being thrown so far back, must, of course, be rendered much less impressive. Yet, such as they are, they arose from the fervid dictates of a mind equally anxious to avoid the charge of fawning adulation, or petu-

lant rancour. Where he has presumed to differ from the taste of the *town*, he flatters himself that he has spoken as a Briton, proudly exulting in the constitution of his country, ever should do—with freedom—with candour—with sincerity—with justice. "*Nothing extenuate, nor set down* "*ought in malice*," was the moral constantly in his eye; and he humbly trusts, that he will be found most strictly to have adhered to the text. When he could yield applause, he was happy to pay it to the deserving individual; but, when he felt himself compelled to censure, he was anxious that the public should bear the greater portion of the burthen, for sanctioning a vitiated taste. Such were the Author's feelings while writing these vo-

lumes; and, should the perusal of them yield his Friends but a few moments entertainment, though his profits will now be little, his satisfaction will be unbounded.

Pall-Mall,
February, 1812.

A PEEP

AT THE

THEATRES.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

HE WHO RIDES A STUMBLING HORSE SHOULD KEEP A STEADY BRIDLE.

"YES, yes, Sir William; depend upon "it, somewhat must be done. We have "seen enough of turning kingdoms up-"side-down, to gratify the pride or pique "of *Robespiers* and *Marats!*—Such lan-

" guage is not to be borne! Our good old
" king, and glorious constitution, are
" much too dear to every loyal Briton, to
" suffer revolutionizing here. However,
" it cannot long resist the torrents of
" eloquence which are, every where, sure
" to meet it. Why, I, myself, was upon
" my legs for three hours and thirty-
" seven minutes, the night before last"—
said the Earl of Hankering to Sir William Vacant, as they slowly entered Hyde Park, at the Grosvenor Gate, on horseback; having met in Park Lane, by appointment.

"Legs! Legs!" cried Sir William,
"Oh! I beg pardon! What was the sub-
"ject, my Lord?"

"Subject!—Let me see—Oh! charge
" of monstrous misconduct in the army—

" or the navy—'pon my honour I don't " recollect which!—But that is quite im- " material, for, be it which it might, it " was a mere *stirrup* to mount his *horse* " on; and, when once seated in his sad- " dle was thought of no more: as he then " gallopped round and round, until there " was scarcely an individual among us " whom he did not make a *cut* or a " *kick* at.—Od so! that was an ugly " *trip!*"

" Trip!—Trip!—Sure!—Did Temple- " ton trip?" (And Sir William patting the neck of his horse, let the rein hang loosely;) " I declare I was listening so " very attentively to you, my lord, that " I did not know I was on horseback. " Pray how long was your lordship in the " army?"

"In the army!" exclaimed the earl, with astonishment at such a question.

"I beg pardon, my lord.—In the "navy, I meant to have said."

"In the navy! Sir William."

"Surely you mentioned somewhat "about being in the army or navy?"

"No, no, Sir William! I was blaming "the conduct of the gentleman for viru-"lently attacking the army or navy; but "endeavouring to fix the odium on us all; "which, I must confess, was acting— "You seem absorbed again, Sir William.

"I always do the same by my grooms; "for, if Hoby will go too fast, and "Langley move too slow, I can't drive

"them with any degree of pleasure; and "am confident that there is a fault some- "where. But the horses are excellent; "and cannot err, in walking, trotting, "kicking, or biting, without instructions; "therefore, sometimes I content myself "with discharging my *grooms;* and, "sometimes, I am so cursedly vexed, "that I would not only discharge my "grooms, and servants, but all my neigh- "bours too, if they were in my power!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well done, Sir Wil- "liam! that is doing business by whole- "sale! That is just like some of our "*Rantipoles,* who, having an eye to "their favourite days of yore, because "they cannot rule us within doors, wish "to drive us out. But those are days "which, I trust, will not—Ha! God "bless me! I feared it would be so!—

" A foot in the stirrup, too!—This comes " of riding in the park without servants! " —Very much obliged to you, *gentle-* " *men!* Don't know what might have " been the consequence if you had not " stopped my friends horse so very op- " portunely!" said the Earl of Hankering, to *one* gentleman, who was holding Sir William's horse; and *two* others who were extricating his foot from the stirrup.

" You are not hurt, I hope, Sir," was asked by all *three*, when they had succeeded in setting the baronet on *his* legs.

" Hey!—O no!—No, no, no! not at " all, gentlemen, not at all! But where's " my horse?"

" Your horse! (exclaimed the earl) " Why, that's your horse, which you are " looking at."

" My horse! What! This my horse! "—A rascal!—I'll discharge my *groom* " the moment I get home. Why, this is " not *Templeton!*—This is *Purly!*—A " rascal! to suffer me to ride *Purly*, " which he knew to be a *stumbler*; merely " because I bid him saddle the horse that " was nearest to me!—Much obliged— " much obliged, gentlemen.—Discharge " my *groom* the moment I get home." And away gallopped the baronet towards Kensington; Lord Hankering trotting gently after, ruminating on allusions and analogies.

" If the person who got the tumble " hadn't called the other, *my lord*, and " threatened to discharge his *groom*, " (though I saw no groom, nor any other

" servant,) I should have thought them
" a couple of *tailors*, riding to Brentford,"
said the person who had holden the
horse.

" Upon my conscience, and if that's
" all, they may be *tailors* for all that;
" and no great things neither; for I have
" the honour to drill in that *squad* my
" ownself; and, I fancy, that I'm as well
" dressed as either of them—and a little
" better, too; because my coat's gen-
" tealer than both."

" By my troth, *bonny lad*, I should
" have thought a coat of good *North of*
" *Britain* cloth would *ha* been abundantly
" *gude* enough for you, *an* you were
" master of all the *tailors* in London,"
said the *third* person; who happened to
be a journeyman joiner, from Edinburgh.

" Faith, and you may say that, my
" good fellow,—with the *highland* brogue
" upon the tip of your tongue. But, as
" it happened to fall out, I bought my
" coat, one day, for nothing at all. And
" I didn't pay for it, too, to be sure!—
" by holding it for half-an-hour—almost,
" while a gentleman was taking a decent
" *Mendoza* with a saucy black-guard of a
" *chimney-sweeper*, because *Mr. Sooty*
" had frightened his horse at the end of
" Park Lane; when, thinking that he
" meant to make a *shop-board* of my pair
" of arms, and might employ me all day
" on the *job*, I made bold to walk a little
" way up the lane, and calling, loud
" enough to hear myself speak, very
" plainly, where I lived, and was always
" to be found, when I was met with, I
" turned down Hertford Street, and went
" home, sure enough. Nor has the gen-

“ tleman ever once called for his coat
“ since ; though he might have been sure
“ I'd take care of it—according to my
“ promise.”

“ What! a journeyman tailor, in a
“ gentleman's coat, not honestly come by,
“ thrust himself into our company !” said
the *first* person, who was an attorney's
clerk, of the true Bacchanalian stamp.

In fact, the parties were strangers to each other, having met at a public-house at Kensington the preceding evening; and, after spending the whole of the Sunday night, in drinking geneva and water, smoaking their pipes, and settling the state of the nation, were walking, not quite soberly, to get some a-la-mode beef; and then conclude *St. Monday* by taking a dance at a famous

twelve-penny *hop*, in a snug street near Long Acre; when, fortunately for Sir William Vacant, they were just in time to catch his horse by the bridle, as he was starting off with the baronet's foot in the stirrup.

The Hibernian *tailor*, possessing all the irritability peculiar to his countrymen, felt himself highly offended at the sarcastic rebuke of *Mr. Latitat's scribe*; and, after returning the compliment with a host of execrations, he modulated his voice into a satirical *piano*, and concluded his *philippic* with—"To be sure "*Mr. John Doe and Richard Roe's* journeyman, I wonder who was the most "of a gentleman, when he readily changed "his pound note to pay for the last half "pint of gin and the breakfasts, because "you, neither of you, happened to have

"any *silver* in your pockets:—no, by "my s——! nor a bit of *rag* neither! "And I'll venture to say that, for all I "happen to be a journeyman *tailor*, and "am before *jontlemen!*"

The *gentleman joiner* prudently concluded, that, where nothing good was likely to be got by speaking, the least that was said was the soonest mended; so very wisely resolved to keep perfectly silent.

Not so the *gentleman clerk.*—The honour of his profession was at stake, by *Pat* having, accidentally, in the heat of his argument, called him a *petty-fogging blackguard.* He, therefore, felt it his duty to reply—rejoin—retort—rebut, and amend his declarations *ad infinitem!* till, at length, *vi et armis* became the order

of the day; and the manœuvres of squaring, strutting, and stripping, were soon resorted to.

By that time there were numerous parties of *careful gentlemen* assembled round them; so that they found very little difficulty in confiding their clothes to those who readily pledged their *honour* for their *safety*. And, during the conflict, the elegant *coat*, which *Pat* had taken such great care of, was born off the field-of-battle by the identical *chimney-sweeper* who had affrighted the gentleman's horse at the end of Park Lane. However, as the pugilistic *Milesian* had enjoyed the supreme felicity of *darkening* an eye,—displacing three teeth, and *doubling-up* the well-pummelled body of his adversary, he paraded along Piccadilly, in *buff*, with tolerable spirits:—consoling

himself for his losses by frequently swearing, that he would attend the next *Westminster Meeting*, and second a vote of censure on *Ministers*, "for not maintain-"ing a better police in the streets;—yes, "faith; and in Hyde Park, too, into the "bargain."

The unfortunate *scribe* of *Mr. Latitat*, did not quit the field so readily, or so easily. His shirt, hat, and even his cane, were speedily found; for some *blackguard boys* had promised to take care of them, and would deliver them to none but their owner: but his coat and waistcoat, unfortunately, were not returnable; because a *gentleman*, of very decent appearance, had solemnly pledged himself for their *safety*. Vainly searching the field of action, over and over; looking around him with *one* eye, and exhorting those

who had *two*, to look with *both*, he, with a heavy heart, moved slowly towards Grosvenor Gate, feeling his bruised places as he went along; and, on leaving the park, surveying himself as well as he was able, he said, with a sigh—" So, after all " my *rows* and *trials*, I am *non*-suited " at last?"

CHAPTER II.

HOW MANY HAVE SAID---"WE WILL RIDE TO WINDSOR," AND HAVE NEVER REACHED HOUNSLOW!

SIR William Vacant, whom we saw gallopping off, after his tumble, in the last chapter, rode on, until arriving at Kensington Gate; when he was compelled to hear a man, who was crossing the gateway, immediately before his horse, bawl out—"Zounds! don't be in such a cursed "hurry, Jack! Wait a bit, and I'll be "with you presently."

The baronet started—"Egad!" thought he, "that fellow may be my conscience "personified! reminding me of gallopping "away from Lord Hankering so very "abruptly." Therefore, to atone for such misconduct, he gallopped back, full as fast; and, something about *Tattersall* shooting through his pericranium, he, most probably, would have passed the *earl*, in his speed; (who was cogitating on the *analogy* between a *vacant man*, who thinks of nothing, and the *previous question*, which undoes every thing!) but *Purly* happening to stumble again, at that critical instant, both became roused from their reveries; the *baronet* finding it necessary to check his horse, and the *peer* feeling it necessary to say—"Take "care, Sir!" An apology for having so abruptly gallopped away, by the one; and a congratulation, on having escaped a

second tumble, by the other; immediately reconciled the parties: and they cantered along for Richmond; in order to eat *eels* in perfection, at the *Star and Garter!* which—by the bye, had been *shut up* for more than a year! and was not expected to be re-opened in any great haste.

A thorough-bred seaman will never promise to be in a certain place, and at a certain time, without adding a reserving clause to the agreement—"*Wind and "weather permitting.*" And it might have been just as well if our two equestrians had tacked such a reserve to their assertion of being at Richmond in half an hour; when a pebble-stone, a two-penny nail,—even a grain of sand, might retard their progress for a day. They rode on, tolerably communicative and rational, till

on Turnham Green; when the conversation experienced a trifling *hiatus*, from a contrast of ideas, on the same object, rudely forcing an entrance into the regions of the *occiput!* Lord Hankering was *lost* in attempting to conceive the difference of flavour between an *eel* caught by the *head*, and another by the *tail;* while the baronet was absorbed in the richness of flavour which an *eel* must possess, could it be completely *roasted, and served up alive!*—Such being their contemplations; and a light breeze, according to the nautical phrase, setting full in their teeth, a wandering *insect* was *driven* into the *peer's* right eye. So it is not very surprising that he should suddenly have stopped; or that his friend should have proceeded without him.

"Hey dey! Sir William!—whither can-

" tering so contemplatively—without your " friend too! for, perceive, my brother is " some yards behind you; and seems to " be annoyed by something, as he is rub- " bing his eye."—Said the sister of Lord Hankering; who, with her amiable companion, Miss Eliza O'Mara, was crossing the green in her curricle.

" Egad, I have committed another *faux* " *paux*, my lady! Left my friend a second " time—on the same day too! However, " your ladyship may bring me off this " time, as I shall lay the blame on my " eagerness to wish you, and your lovely " friend, good morning."

" What is the matter, my lord?" said Lady Harriett, on driving up to her brother.

" Some confounded insect has got into " my eye, and is tormenting me exceed- " ingly. Where have you been travel- " ling to? And so early!"

" Early! Why, 'tis past three o'clock! " We have been to Chiswick. How far " are you going?"

As his lordship was too intensely occu-cupied to answer immediately, Sir William, who actually heard the question distinctly, replied—" *Eels!—eels* in per- " fection at the Star and Garter, on Rich- " mond Hill! Will you turn about and " go with us?"

" With all my heart! What say you, " Eliza? Shall we enjoy the frolic?"

" Upon my honour, my dear, I am in

"such exquisite torture," said my lord, "that I must be permitted to follow you, "after having procured a glass of water."

"Upon my honour, but you shall not, "my lord. Here seems to be a very "decent house close to us. Suppose we "stop at the Pack-Horse? We may, pos-"sibly, procure *eels* here; at all events "we shall be able to get water, and that "seems to be the most essential article at "present." Accordingly, to the Pack-Horse they went; where the earl soon found relief, though little inclined to go farther; and still less to return to town before dinner. So, no *eels* being on the spot, they resolved to supply the deficiency with a small *turbot* and *rump steaks*:—under a promise from the waiter, that the wine should be excellent.

CHAPTER III.

TRAVELLERS WHO DO NOT POSSESS GOOD TEETH MUST FAIR ILL ON TOUGH MEAT.

IN a world like our's, where Nature has so highly contrasted many of her works, as to outrage all analogy.—Where men, full six feet high, may be met with, who have hearts as meek as those of *pigeons;* while dwarfs, of four feet only, shall possess those of *lions.*—Where a female, with the eye of a *hawk,* and the face of a *termigant,* may possess the tongue of a *lamb;* while another, with the counte-

nance of a *Magdalene*, or a *Hope*, shall have an oral organ, loud as the bell of St. Paul's—shrill as the tempest in the rigging of ships—and incessant as the falls of Niagara!—In such a world, where boisterous politicians clamour for reform in flaming speeches at public meetings; yet mount the rostrum merely as a stalking-horse to ride after jobs or contracts!—Where pros——s are loudly cheered for bearding Royalty in public assemblies; yet paid princely sums for commiting acts of fraud and infidelity, which should have placed them on the pillory!—Where political Charletans will loudly doubt the honour of a whole legislature, yet give up their own with perfect *sang froid!*—Where the malignant impulse of the *Fiend of Europe* can wind up wretches to the desperate resolution of assassinating one of the most amiable of princes, in

hope of shaking an empire to its centre; yet find partizans who will rapturously boast of his imperial virtues and magnanimity, to a people shuddering with horror at his impious deeds! In such a world we are not to wonder if the ideas of publicans should be equally contrasted, and that they should hold out signs, or symbols, of accommodation, full as opposite to their natural disposition as the fire they roast with, and the water which they boil with. Thus, if you enter a house with the sign of an *Angel*, take care you do not experience the treatment of a *Fiend!*—The sign of the *Silent Woman* may conceal a pestiferous *Scold!*—The *Three Pigeons* a family of *Harpies!*—And the inanimate representation of an innocent *Lamb*, the animate presence of a human *Tiger*! While at the *Bull* you may sleep quiet: at the *Lion* be received

by a jolly, facetious, good-hearted, fellow :—at the *Bear* experience, kindness and hospitality :—at the *Saracen's Head* meet the picture of affability :—and, at the *Tiger-Cat*, meet the presence of an *angel*.

In some instances, however, the signs and sign-holders are synonimous :—and these may arise from two causes—either the landlord may adopt his own sign by mere accident; as, where a man, wishing to buy a good second-hand sign, resolves to purchase the first he can meet with: or the sign may already be adopted for the landlord. The latter was the case immediately before us; and, had the whole College of Physicians been consulted in discriminating and adapting the physical capacities of the *man* to the exact representation of his *sign*, they

could not have succeeded more happily. He was heavy—dull—athletic; and so were his waiters. Every thing was adapted to the region of pack-horses, and those who drive them. The chairs were of solid, smooth, cold, oak:—the knives of the largest size; and the handles of bucks-horn, not easily grasped by a stout fellow: —the bread was of the household kind; very high baked, and *only five days old:* —the beer was strong and sharp (some people would have called it sour):—and, the wine, was a robust composition of equal quantities of slow-juice and British brandy.

After being freed from anxiety, as to his lordship's eye—the strength and salubrity of the Pack-horse water having already placed it in *statu quo*—on looking about them, they instantly found three of

their senses highly regaled:—hearing—seeing—and feeling: from the hardness of the seats; the massy construction of the furniture; and the noise in the tap-room, which was directly underneath them. That of the other two senses had nearly been anticipated by Lady Harriett saying—"I wonder what sort of a dinner "we shall get in this *queer house!* A nice "turbot, and a fine rump-steak, are not "bad articles, where there are good ap-"petites." But the bait was thrown out in vain. Miss O'Mara smiled:—Lord Hankering shook his head:—and Sir William said somewhat about his *groom*.

As the motions of the family were of the true pack-horse kind, it was not supposed that the serving up dinner would be the work of a minute only; therefore, Lady Harriett resolved to have some en-

tertainment early, where good of every kind was announced on the sign; so, rang for the landlord, who, in less than a quarter of an hour, stumbled into the room—*ducking* his head at the door, as *geese* do.

Soon despairing of making such a subject spin like a *top*, her ladyship consoled herself by fancying that he would make an excellent *drum*; but, after a multiplicity of efforts, she could beat no more out of him, than plain *yes* and *no*, though strongly spoken, and toughly aspirated. At length, just as the earl was conceiving an analogy between the landlord and the dinner, she, most fortunately, touched a chord which absolutely made him speak more than a dozen syllables!—"Have "you any pleasant prospects about your "house, landlord?" was the question

asked :—and, "A very fine one before "the window," was the answer given.

The parties rose instantly to view the fine prospect, and saw four stout fellows removing a *muck-midden !*—The ladies instinctively held their handkerchiefs to their noses.—"'Tis lucky that the wind "blows from the house," said his lordship.—"A rascal ! to set me upon *Purly*," muttered the baronet ; removing from the window.

"What fine *sparragrass* we shall have "when bottom of *midden* is spread on "the tops of the *beds*.—Hey !—Smell "dinner !"—And the smell of the dinner made the landlord stumble out of the room.

"Most delectable entertainment—for

"horses, I am sure! Now let us see what "we have for man!" said Miss O'Mara, laughing, and hearing the waiters approach.

The dinner entered! Slow and solemn as the sable plumes preceding a hearse. The plates were so laughably hot as to induce the company to touch them with the utmost caution; and, as the cook was half-seas-over, the dinner happened to be very well done—if that could have recommended it. The *turbot* was strong, but eatable; the *melted-butter* somewhat stronger; but the *steaks*, which, in fact, had been cut from the *chuck-rib*, instead of the *rump*, were the strongest of all!—if strength and toughness may be deemed synonimous.

The ladies, who were really hungry,

ate heartily of the *fish*, after waiting ten minutes for some excellent catchup; and frequently laughed at the gentlemen, who, labouring under the disadvantage of a draught of air, had more of the odour of the *turbot* than was agreeable to them, yet dared not explain themselves, for fear of spoiling the ladies appetites. They often cast a look of desire towards the *steaks*, which rudely set their masticating powers at defiance; indeed, the first effort had like to have been fatal to Sir William, who, consequently, cursed his *groom* for suffering him to ride *Purly*. At length, a huge *apple-pie*, the crust of which was not many degrees harder than the bread they had been eating, but the fruit fine, made its appearance, ushered forward by a tremendous *cheshire-cheese* of the first quality; on which they made shift to *work through* a tolerable *luncheon*:

when, having literally *drenched* themselves with one glass of *wine*, and tossed the remainder, with the bottle, to the men at the *muck-midden*, they rang for the bill.

As an affair of such import, at the Pack-Horse, *so mounted*, could not be instantly adjusted, our company was not much surprised at waiting half-an-hour. Sir William then stretched out his hand—received the bill, and groaned!—Lord Hankering stared!—The ladies wondered! The baronet made a wry face and paid the bill. It savoured of the dinner; in fact, it was stronger than all the rest—they might have dined at the London Tavern for less money.

But the *strength* of the bill was not the cause of Sir William groaning. Having

become cool, he really felt great pain on suddenly stretching out his arm; and, on mentioning the circumstance, an apothecary was sent for, who soon discovered that the baronet had received a contusion on his shoulder; and, while bathing it, predicted, that, on his arrival in Town, he might find it necessary to confine himself for a few days.

This intelligence was by no means pleasing to any of the party.—To Sir William it was very disagreeable, as he considered confinement a most dreadful *bore*; however, he consoled himself, in some degree, by frequently resolving to discharge his *groom* for suffering him to mount *Purly*, after repeatedly telling him that he was addicted to stumbling.

On leaving the house, Lady Harriett

invited the baronet to squeeze himself into the curricle with them. But he declined the invitation, by shaking his head, and exclaiming—" Mercy! for Heaven's " sake, my lady! pressed to a mummy " before we get to Kensington!"—putting his foot in the stirrup, and turning towards Miss O'Mara, he said—" Confound " the horse for hurting my shoulder " so! as confinement is the *devil*, you " know, Miss;" while the landlord of the Pack-Horse lifted him into his saddle.

" Never mind, Sir William," said the lady, somewhat archly; " it is the way of " the world, you know—the *hobby* stum- " bles, and its rider gets confined!"

Nothing material occurred on their ride to town, except that Sir William was frequently asked how he felt himself, and

generally answered—"Rather better;" though his replies were as generally accompanied with a denunciation against his *groom*, for suffering him to ride *Purly*, though he knew he was addicted to stumbling; but, during the whole of the ride to town, the poor animal stumbled only once, and that was when passing the barrack-gate, at Knightsbridge.

At the end of Park Lane the company separated: Lord Hankering and Sir William rode forward; while Lady Harriett directed her horses towards the lane, at the end of which two gentlemen, in evident haste, were preparing to cross. They started back—looked at the ladies, and bowed.

"I wonder who those gentlemen are!" said her ladyship, checking a rising sigh.

—" And I, also, wonder what they would " say, if they knew that we had christ-" ened them *Cato* and *Juba*!"

" That I cannot conceive, my lady," said Miss O'Mara, with some difficulty suppressing a sigh, which had very nearly escaped her.

CHAPTER IV.

HE WHO WOULD SPEAK IMPARTIALLY OF OTHERS, SHOULD SPEAK BUT SPARINGLY, AS GARRULITY IS APT TO EXAGGERATE.

WHAT a wonderful thing it is, that some authors should possess the faculty of remembrance in so eminent a degree, as not only to retain every thing which they hear or see; but, sometimes, considerably more! To such happy advantages in the story-telling line of their department —advantages, indeed, which can be attri-

buted to little less than *inspiration*, the readers of novels are obliged for innumerable discoveries, on the spur of the moment, which none but authors, actually *retaining* more than they ever heard, or saw, could, with such infinite elegance of diction—such perspicuity of description—and such preciseness of recital, have brought to the light of an astonished world!

By attributes so happy, and so convenient, we are enabled to perceive that our Readers already begin to feel a little anxious for a formal introduction to the party whom we left at the end of the last chapter; that they may, by such means, have an opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with them, and their connections. And, by the same enlightened acquisitions, we, happily,

are enabled to give our fair and amiable *inquisitors*, all possible satisfaction.

The Earl of Hankering, then, we have the honour to introduce to our Readers, as the only son and successor of a gentleman, who, through the partiality of an amiable daughter of an eminent *contractor*, and a series of auspicious speculations, rapidly rose, from the inferior *clerk* of an extensive counting-house, to a *merchant*—a *member of parliament*—and a *peer of the realm!*

Indeed, it was shrewdly suspected, when the batch of peers was drawn from the political oven, that the minister, in designating the title of *Earl of Hankering*, had cast a satirical eye on the gentleman's natural disposition; which, truth to tell, was certainly of the *hankering*

kind; as there were very few *good things* to be disposed of, in the contract and loan departments, which he had not a vehement *hankering* after. On the other hand, it has been stoutly asserted, that his title originated from his fine domain, called *Hankering Park;* which, with an absolute promise of the title, he obtained in the way of *trade*—by actually *bartering* his lady for it!

"By actually bartering his lady!"—Yes, my good friends, by actually bartering his lady.—And thereby hangs a tale, which we will endeavour to relate as concisely and impartially as possible.

Mrs. Loveplumb, the second wife of the merchant, member of parliament and peer, above alluded to, (the first wife, who was the mother of the present earl,

and of Lady Harriett, though a most amiable woman, being merely the wife of his convenience); to an elegant form, beautiful features, charming complexion, and fascinating manners, had acquired a degree of passiveness, which, if it be a virtue, might have constituted her *Virtue* itself! It, therefore, is not surprising, that Mr. Loveplumb, still in the prime of life, (the lady possessing thirty thousand pounds, too) should marry a woman so abounding in requisites to make a man happy. He did actually marry her; and he did actually love her—more than any thing on earth, except *jobs*, *loans*, and the *consols*. Those ever occupied three-fourths of his heart; but the other integral part, with the exception of a portion devoted to business, was all her own; and as with that portion, not otherwise possessed, she was most exemplary pas-

sive and easy, we may, with Mr. Loveplumb, very naturally suppose that she was contented and happy.

So time glided on, till happening to be cooling themselves at a certain watering-place, during the sultry months of the third summer of their union, the amorous proprietor of Hankering Park, being then on the same errand, soon formed an intimacy with them; and was allowed, by all the company present at the place, to be much more than usually complaisant.

In fact, the most noble peer (for he stood high on the list) was completely enslaved before he thought himself in danger. Though he saw that Mrs. Loveplumb was a tempting creature, he did not perceive any thing to terrify him with

an apprehension of the loss of liberty; on the contrary, the marked proneness of the lady to *passiveness*, induced him to hope, that, flattery on the one hand, and ambition on the other, might work wonders in his favour. He, therefore, gallantly pursued his intimacy, with repeated professions of friendship and influence to Mr. Loveplumb, and the profoundest respect and attention to his lady. But, whichever way he made his approaches to her, whether *direct*, *zig-zag*, or *circumvallatory*, he always found her strictly *passive*.—He courted her a little—hinted a little—pressed a little:—still the lady was passive. At length, as love and madness are very nearly allied, he ventured on a proposition, which made her, rather *actively*, reply—" That is impossible, " my lord—you know that cannot be; " for I am already married."

Whether it was love or fortune that conjured up the idea, we are not informed, but the most noble peer instantly replied — "Would it were possible to "effect an exchange of your marriage and "my fortune! — With what transport "would I give all I possess on earth to "Mr. Loveplumb, would he but endow "me with you in return!"—Here the lady became passive again; when the conversation was terminated by the approach of the husband.—But it soon happening to turn on the ease with which marriages were dissolved in the *good days of popery*, where family connexions, or material emolument, were concerned, the most noble peer involuntarily dropt a hint to that purpose; which, to his astonishment, he found to be received alike passively by *husband* and *wife!*

Seeing little probability of succeeding his own way, by a regular siege;—thinking, that, where *jobs*, *loans*, and the *consuls*, possess three-fourths of the heart, it might not be impossible to eject beauty from the other part, by the introduction of ambition; and, finding that the lady was absolutely necessary to his happiness, he resolved to try what could be effected out of hand by private treaty. In a few days, therefore, having been well assured by his agent, (learned in the law,) that, if all parties were agreeable, matters might easily be duly arranged; after most eloquently expatiating on the happy and honourable distinctions of titles; and, on the infinite degree of influence which constantly attended them, he ventured to drop a *hint*, that could not be mis-conceived; and which, after some little hesitation, procured him the following truly vivi-

fying reply.—"I'll turn it over in my "mind, my lord, and give you my "opinion to-morrow."

Sure enough, the *peer* was right, in that instance at least; as it soon appeared, that, where beauty possessed but a fourth part of a heart, it could not long maintain its ground against the united attacks of ambition and influence. In the course of a pillow-conversation, Mr. Loveplumb ventured to hint at that with the noble peer, and his tempting proposal:—nor was he less pleased than surprised at finding his lady full as passive as usual. In short, what with love, and what with ambition; together with a wife, plastick even to a wish; our readers will not be much astonished, we presume, when informed, that, in a few months, the *agent* was amply recompensed for sitting up

with the lady in the chamber of an *inn*;—tumbling the bed, *quantum sufficit*, before they left the room in the morning; and being cast in ten thousand pounds damages for such *criminal* conversation!—The lady was duly transferred to the enraptured most noble peer! and Mr. Loveplumb was endowed with Hankering Park, estimated at full forty thousand pounds, and actually made a peer!—So much for divorces! And, while all parties duly keep the secret, how can they be prevented?

CHAPTER V.

IT IS THE SIRE, THEY SAY, THAT INFLUENCES THE BREED; BUT IT IS ALSO SAID, THAT--- "THERE IS NO GENERAL RULE WITHOUT AN "EXCEPTION."

IN several parts of Europe the nobility do not conceive it derogatory to their noble dignity to keep a *wine-cellar*. In the United Kingdom we are somewhat more fastidious. But though our noble peers would deem it as obnoxious to the dignity of parliament to retail wine, as a Mahomedan would deem it irreligious to

drink it; yet many of them will not hesitate to become dealers and chapmen in *water;* and serve half the kingdom with the *pure element.*—Nay, so strongly impressed are many of them with the *esprit du commerce,* that they will not hesitate to wound the feelings of a poor man who happens to be deficient in his payments, by depriving him of the very *article* through which the lympid stream is conveyed.

So, when our new peer put on his robe of dignity, he most conscientiously throw off the ostensible insignia of trade and barter. But, although Hankering Park was a delicious banquet to him—we beg pardon; to his *lordship* we should have said; it could not satiate all other hankerings. Business was his idol, and in business he must be occupied, or life would

soon become a burthen to him; therefore, if he was not yet qualified to preside in some ostensible department of the state, he must, at all events, look out for employment somewhere else. Luckily for him, as every age had become wiser and wiser, for many centuries, the important discovery was opportunely made, that, in the essential elements—*fire* and *water*, even kings might become dealers, without vitiating their excellency. The idea was inestimable! He insured plenty of business, for all—but the *sleeping partners*; and portended no small quantum of profit. He embraced it with all the eagerness of a burning bridegroom. In a few months *The Right Honourable the Earl of Hankering* was at the head of half the *firms* of *Water-Offices* and *Fire-Offices* in the United Kingdom. And, indeed, it was with much difficulty that his friends

could restrain him from exposing himself to mercantile censure, by figuring away at the head of a *firm* for supplying the poor people of the metropolis with *heat* and *light*, without incurring the expense of *fire* and *candle!* evidently death-blows to the *Czar of Muscovy* and the *New-castle Coal Trade!*

Such was the new peer, *ci-devant* Mr. Loveplumb! But, as it is not every son, who, in the strictest sense of the phrase, can be termed—"Father's own child"—so, here, there happened not to be a shadow of analogy; if we except a tolerable portion of partiality for the *consols*, and ardent hankerings for *loaves* and *fishes*. To the father, business was a source of *rapture*—to the son, it was little better than *rats-bane!* The father prided himself upon being a *ready-money* man:—

the son would have blushed, had he caught himself paying a debt, of so much as ten pounds, in less than a twelve-month; and, even then, few could stand the *din* of a *dun* with more philosophical apathy! The father gloried in making a good bargain—the son thought bargains in trade disgraceful even to a Jew! The father was no gamester, and never lost ten pounds by a bet in his life:—the son was no gamester neither; for, in fact, it required too much trouble to qualify himself for such a profession; but, understanding that the greatest statesmen were sometimes the greatest gamesters; and that if he meant to share in the *loaves* and *fishes*, he must pass for a man of brilliant talents, he often contrived to evince his claim to political notice, by emptying his pocket at the hazard-table, without knowing any essentials of the game. The

father, in his generous moments, evinced traits of liberality;—but as the son has been seldom known to experience similar moments, such traits are, at present, in embryo. Thus, contrasted to his sire, appears the noble peer, whom we introduced to our readers, *en passant*, in Hyde Park, and at the Pack-Horse. Had the contrast proved equally in favour of his lordship, it would, certainly have been more favourable to us; for, as every generation grows wiser and wiser, so we should be happy to see it become better and better.

Lady Harriett Loveplumb, the amiable sister of the second peer, was of a disposition widely different from her brother. She was not only partial to a partial phrase of an amiable duchess—"Be just before "you are generous," but, by a judicious

economy, was enabled to be both. Nor was her advice, as to similar conduct, seldom volunteered to her brother, though to very little purpose. She possessed a pleasing form, agreeable features, a good understanding, and ready, though not what is called a piercing, wit; with a niceness of taste and discrimination, evidently the good effects of an excellent education. Her attachments were warm, sincere, and disinterested; nor could accident or misfortune diminish her esteem, where no criminality was evident. Her fortune was ample; as, in addition to thirty thousand pounds left her by her father, she possessed an estate of two thousand pounds per annum, left her by an aunt; and twenty thousand pounds left her by her mother. And being, at the commencement of this work, in her twenty-third year, she determined to enjoy the good

things of this world with freedom, yet discretion:—to appropriate a tythe of her clear income to the relief of honest indigence; and to live for the benefit of others as well as of herself. A strange contrast to her brother, indeed! who was so much the slave of egotism, that he hardly ever spoke, or even thought, but with an eye to self—ever prefacing each speech and action, of any consequence, with the mental reservation—" I am my-" self alone!"

With respect to Sir William Vacant, he was a person of no small consequence, in the eyes of the ladies—both mothers and daughters; possessing a fine unencumbered estate of nine thousand per annum. Such estate not a little enhanced too, by the owner being a very *personable gentleman*, and of a vacant, unmeaning, dis-

position, so admirably adapted to yielding his happy lady the enviable opportunity of rendering herself the *master* of the family. But as young men, of volatile constitutions, will involuntarily expose the ruling passions of their hearts; in those of the vacant kind, such passions may remain latent for years, until, like lightning, called into action by proper conductors: therefore, let those ladies beware, lest the object of a Sir William's choice should be doomed to elicit a pertinacity for domestic controul into action, which would banish from their imaginations every hope of obtaining delightful sovereign sway! In fact, we, who, from our kind of *second-sight*, see farther into men and things than the generality of our contemporaries, had reason to believe that Sir William's latent qualities had

some analogy to those frequently displayed by certain pampered animals of the quadruped tribe; consequently, that, when in *connubial harness*, he would better *lead* than *drive*. If so, let no one, who values her domestic peace, dare to encounter such a man, unless fully determined gently to sooth him, by kindly patting him with her hand, rather than laying the lash over him. Nor are the various branches of the family of the *Vacants*, those only, who might the more easily be reduced to obedience, by the flattering appearance of being opportunely obeyed. But, at an æra like this, when the Tyrant of Europe yields such evident proofs that an amiable foreigner can controul the passions of the conqueror, or, rather, the *cozener*, of so many nations, we do not wonder that the loveliest women

in the universe should maintain it, as a principal tenet in *Love's creed,* that those who cannot help admiring them, should readily yield implicit obedience to them.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT MUST BE THE FEELINGS OF A TENDER PARENT WHEN COMPELLED TO LEAVE A DARLING INFANT IN A STATE OF UNCERTAINTY, EVEN AS TO SUPPORT?

As we have only one Person more of the Turnham-Green-party, to introduce to our Readers, we will venture to be a little more circumstantial in our account of her; for, though the humblest of the *four*, she, certainly, is not the least estimable.

Miss Eliza O'Mara was, beyond a doubt, the daughter of a person of some consequence; though, for reasons of no trifling nature, they were compelled to throw her on the benevolence of some humane family; or to confide her to the care of those who were base enough to vilify the trust placed in them. For, when she was about eighteen months old, on a servant opening Mr. Loveplumb's door, in consequence of a loud rap, she was discovered, dressed in the genteelest style, moving from the upper step towards the door, which she entered *sans ceremonie*; lisping—" Where is Mama ?"—The evening was considerably advanced—near nine o'clock.—It was dark and cold—the middle of December.

Having looked about the door, in vain, for somebody to own the child; and in-

quired to as little purpose at several houses in the same street; on returning to the hall, the servant was not a little alarmed at beholding the lovely infant sprawling on the body of a large mastiff, (which, by accident had strayed from the yard,) and playing with his ear! As the young man knew such familiar pastime to be a service of danger, even with the adult, he pursued the gentlest means of taking the child from the dog, which the animal did not seem very willing to part with; and, after turning him into the yard, he, with some apprehension of censure, ventured to inform Mrs. Loveplumb of the arrival of her little *visitor*. The good lady cheerfully commanded him to introduce her immediately.

"Mamma! Mamma! my Mamma!"— exclaimed the little wanderer; running to

Mrs. Loveplumb, and looking rather apprehensively at Lady Harriett; who, to appearance, was about three years older than herself, and gazing with astonishment at the pretty little baby.

"What is your name? my little sweet "créature!" said the amiable matron, to the child, then on her knee, and pressing it to her throbbing bosom.

"Lizzy, Lizzy! your Lizzy!" was the child's reply; and, after some caresses from Lady Harriett, she, too, obtained the intelligence—"Lizzy, Lizzy! your "Lizzy!" But no farther insight could either obtain; though the lovely infant seemed perfectly at ease, and very communicative.

As little Lizzy, or, rather, *Eliza*, for

that Mrs. Loveplumb concluded to be her Christian name;—as she soon became sleepy, and all hope of discovering her parents, until the following day, had vanished; she, as an especial mark of indulgence to Lady Harriett, was consigned to the care of the same servant; and both were to sleep together.

After the servant had taken the children away to their chamber, Mrs. Loveplumb, who had studied herself into a profound reverie, on the situation of the darling stranger, was agreeably surprized by the hasty entrance of the servant with a small letter in her hand; which, on undressing little Eliza, she had found pinned under her frock. The good lady eagerly broke the piece of a wafer with which the letter was sealed, and perused as follows:—"The bearer is the inesti-

" mable, but rather unwelcome, pledge of
" a private marriage. The lives of child
" and parents, would, most probably, be
" sacrificed to cursed ambition, if the
" match were discovered; and unexpcted
" measures, hastily adopted, render this
" mode of disposing of the charming babe
" absolutely indispensible; having no time
" to procure a proper nurse, or otherwise
" dispose of it in safety. May God, of
" his infinite goodness, direct her to some
" tender Christian's house! for, though
" heedfully watched, she has, under the
" direction of Providence, the sole choice
" of the door to be knocked at. For the
" love of God! protect—cherish—and
" educate the infant well! and rest as-
" sured you will be amply remunerated
" your expenses, and rewarded for your
" humanity and trouble.—N B. Inclosed
" you will find a fifty pound note; also

" the half of a sixpence of George the
" second, remarkably fresh :—be so good
" to preserve it carefully, as we shall pre-
" serve the *piece* which matches with it.
" Adieu! Adieu! Adieu! my precious
" babe—May the God of all goodness
" bless and preserve you! and those who
" may protect you!"

The hand-writing was, apparently, that of a female.—" No doubt, the mother," thought Mrs. Loveplumb; therefore, readily conjectured what her feelings must have been, when writing, and shed a shower of tears over the gloomy paper.—" How dreadfully critical was the child's " situation!" cried the amiable lady; " and " how infinitely good was the Almighty " to direct her steps to me!" She had, in the benevolence of her heart, just determined to bring up the sweet infant as her

own—that was, *if Mr. Loveplumb approved of her little plan*—when Mr. Loveplumb, with a brow clouded with discontent, returned from the House of C——; where a resolution, which he fancied would be baneful to his immediate interest, though evidently advantageous to his country, had been carried without a division, in spite of his ardent wishes to the contrary!—He threw himself on the sofa, and groaned as if labouring under bodily anguish.

"Heavens! My dear Mr. Loveplumb, "are you not well!"

"Well! D———n!" exclaimed the merchant; "How can a man be well "when he has been ruined—robbed— "murdered! by a set of cursed conspi- "spirators. A set of smooth-tongued

" *devils,* who seem to level all their
" shafts of envy and malevolence at my
" devoted head!"

" You alarm me exceedingly, my dear.
" What has occurred to render you so
" gloomy?"

" The destruction of us all has oc-
" curred, I am afraid," cried he—rolling
about, as if in absolute despair.

" Destruction! What destruction? Are
" *we,* too, to be swallowed up in the re-
" volutionary vortex?"

" Revolutionary vortex! Revolutionary
" foolshead! I wish we were! Yes, most
" devoutly do I wish we were! For, let
" them do their worst, they can but de-
" prive us of our property. They can

"but say—'Give us all your money, and "we'll make you a flourishing people.'— "They can but ruin us at once."

"My dear Mr. Loveplumb! for Mercy's "sake let us know what has befallen us! "With such a government, what revo- "lutionary measures can we be subjected "to?—Heaven preserve us from the fangs "of revolutionary harpies!"

"Psha! Nonsense! I am a republican "myself! Yes, from this moment, I de- "clare myself a staunch republican! I'll "trim their worships! I'll expose all the "twists, curls, and contortions, of that "political barbers-pole, bound round with "silken wreaths. I'll trim the chattering "*magpie*, for daring to impound my pro- "perty; and that of a set of the first "mercantile characters upon earth: while

"*Magna Charta* and the *Bill of Right*
"tell us that the property of Britons i
"sacred.—Damme, I'll——"

"Will you indulge me, Mr. Love-
"plumb? Will you explain the busi-
"ness?"

"Explain! What necessity is there for
"an explanation? Does not ruin—does
"not destruction—does not revolution
"stare you in the face?—Can you pay the
"baker?—Can you pay the butcher?—
"Can you pay the grocer?—Can you pay
"the butter-monger?—Can you pay you
"servants their wages without money?—
"Will they be satisfied with paper?—
"No, no, no!—I'll be a republican, and
"look out for myself."

"That, my dear Mr. Loveplumb, will

"be doing as, I have repeatedly heard "you say, all republicans invariably prac- "tice:—stir up mischief and discord, in "hope of gaining public property by pub- "lic plunder. But would such conduct "become a British merchant—and of your "eminenee, too?"

"Can you, and you family, live upon "paper, I say, again?"

"I can only answer that question, in "the manner in which it is put. I say "then, we can live upon paper; and I "have the experience of some years in "my favour. If you allude to the business "which I saw announced for this evening, "in the public papers, I cannot see where "the great difference can be, in the Bank "supplying *paper* for *guineas*, at the "will of the public, under the security of

"the Governor and Company, or under "the security of the State; except that "the latter must be more favourable, and, "no doubt, far more satisfactory to the "people holding that paper: as, in the "first instance, they are only identi- "fied with the Bank; but, in the second, "with the whole Legislature.

"Umph! Why so the *fellow* said, in "his confounded and over-bearing speech: "But will such flimsy sophistry reconcile "me, do you think? or ought it to re- "concile you to the loss of eighty thou- "sand pounds, now in the cashier's "hands? Which sum I might have drawn "all in good golden *guineas!*—Yes, all "in good golden *guineas!*—Do you hear "that, Mrs. Loveplumb?"

"Then, I presume, the motion has

"passed; and the gold is safely locked "up?"

"Yes, yes; the gold is safely locked "up, with a vengeance; and let those "get it out again who can. But you "smile, as if you were pleased at "it!"

"You will surely allow, my dear, that "it is safer to have our gold locked up in "our own Bank, than to be all smuggled "to the Continent, to assist those who "wish to convert it to our ruin."

"Psha! You are a fool! Don't you see "how stocks will fall? Why, I should "not wonder if my *eighty thousand* "would buy twice as much in the *fours* "*consols!*"

"Well, my dear; and will not eighty "thousand pounds worth of paper pur- "chase the same quantity, think you?"

"Umph! There may be somewhat in "that. Well! let me try if I can eat "a bit of supper."—And feeling a little consoled, in the certainty that stocks would fall most amazingly; and, in the hint, that his eighty thousand in bank-paper, would buy double the sum in *fours consols*; also, seeing a very fine pheasant placed on the table, a dish he was remarkably fond of, he gently raised himself, with a sigh, and sat down at the supper.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW MANY WAYS WILL PERSUASION FIND TO INFLUENCE, IF NOT ABSOLUTELY TO SOFTEN, A RUGGED HEART!

AMONG the numerous discoveries of our modern philosophers, who seem to have penetrated the very *arcana* of the four ancient elements, *earth*, *air*, *fire*, and *water!* and to have exposed their beauteous symmetry, in a state of nudity, to the astonishment and entertainment of the vulgar, it is really matter of amase-

ment that none of them should have attempted to analyse the wonderful *somewhats*, which, from time immemorial, have rendered the rhetoric of *females* so irresistible in their *curtain-lectures*, and so persuasive at their *meals!*

With *man*, we know, that, to excell in commanding our attention, and of leading our senses in his train, at pleasure, the most arduous efforts of those attractive auxiliaries—*action*, *gesture*, and impressive *aspiration*, are as essential to celebrity as the very words he enunciates. But where can we look for, or how expect, action, gesture, and impressive aspirations, in our *females;* or even words to enunciate, while making a hearty meal?—Whence, then, are we to look for such persuasive eloquence at the table? I grant that some action, and that of an

engaging nature, may be displayed while carving a favourite dish; and, where age is on the side of the objects to be carved, some few impressive aspirations may be judiciously introduced: but, where the whole scope of their oratory must be confined to praising, or condemning, the viands; or, in persuasions to gormandize to repletion, (an effort of depravity which *authors* are never required to exert, at any body's table!) the words cannot, we should imagine, be very numerous on the one hand, or very eloquent on the other. Much, we must allow, may, on such occasions, be signified by the eyes; and, as the heart may become open to persuasion, in proportion as the cravings of the appetite become appeased, a *glance* may convey more than a chapter—an *arch-look*, than a volume! Glances and arch-looks, however, must be totally out of the ques-

tion, in *curtain-lectures.* There all the arts of eloquence must be centered in the honeyed mode of enunciation only; except, indeed, they should, now and then, be aided with an impressive sigh, or a tender pressure of the hand.—But, as those only, who have experienced such adventitious aids in *curtain-lectures,* can duly explain the conviction which they send to the heart,—to them we leave the exposition of their irresistable influence:—satisfied, within our own hearts, that—"Such things are!"

Although Mr. Loveplumb was not very remarkable for yielding attention to the persuasive eloquence of his lady, he possessed an impulse which instinctively guided him with more facility than is usually attainable, to, what he termed, selecting the *few grains of wheat* from a

conversation on worldly concerns, how much soever the *chaff* might predominate; and as Mrs. Loveplumb had good sense enough to perceive, that, whenever she felt an inclination to influence her husband, it was absolutely requisite to sweeten her arguments with the honey of interest, it is very natural to suppose, that, in an affair of such consequence as the Bank of England stopping payment in gold, while he had eighty thousand pounds in the cashier's hands, every replenished plate must have been accompanied with a lucrative hint, neatly rounded and gilt, as to the immensely happy opportunity of amassing stock in the *fours consols*, remarkably cheap. Indeed, we may readily conclude that she lost no favourable opportunity of reinforcing her arguments on such a subject; especially, as she felt it essentially necessary to sooth his mind to tranquillity

on that head before she dared to hint at the abrupt visit of the lovely little stranger; which a man, so very worldly minded, might deem a serious drawback on his mercantile gains.

Fortunately, for the infant-*protegée*, by the time Mr. Loveplumb had finished his sixth glass of Madeira, after making a very hearty supper, his good lady had obtained so complete a conquest over his pecuniary apprehensions, that he, laughingly, exclaimed—" D—— him! with his treacle " mouth!—He's a clever fellow, too!— " How the devil can he contrive to twist " and twine *us* round his finger so? At all " events, Harriett, I am determined to " feel their pulse, to-morrow, at the Stock- " Exchange."

Here was a moment of apparent satis-

tisfaction, which many a wife, anxious to carry a favourite point, would gladly have caught at. Not so, Mrs. Loveplumb; she wisely recollected the old proverb.—" He " who has just won a race, may lose the " next, if he starts again too quickly ;" therefore, resolved to lay bye for further advantages, and reserve the delicate subject for a *curtain-lecture*.

Here we cannot help observing how happy it is for us authors, of the masculine gender, that felicity should be merely comparative; were it not so, we should certainly feel ourselves the most wretched set of beings upon earth, as the advantages which females have over us, in many instances, is actually immense, and would harrow up the feelings of the most stoical among us. How, in the world, should we be able to reconcile ourselves o that

amazing redundancy of invention with which the ladies abound, did not our ideas of comparative happiness induce us to believe, that rapid, ripling streams, can never be deep; and, consequently, cannot abound with *fish* of superior size or quality. How should we be able to reconcile ourselves to that incessant towering of *their* genius which induces them so frequently to soar aloft, and dart their mental eyes down on forests—glens—castles—and caverns, impervious to the natural eye, and impenetrable to bodies clothed in silks and muslins; but that the old proverb—" He who stands by, can " see as far into the mill-stone as he who is " picking it;" helps to keep up our spirits. And how should we endure being prohibited, by the strict injunctions of decency, from attending to the minutiæ of *curtain-lectures*; while the females, from

the inherent curiosity planted in their natures, plead an imprescriptable right to peep and pry into every corner—even of the wedding-chamber; but that the extreme delicacy which universally pervades their lucubrations, prevents them from revealing what they hear—see—and comprehend!

Such being the disadvantages which male authors labour under, it will not be expected that we should attempt to describe how, or which way, the *curtain-lecture* was conducted; but, that it ended to the advantage of Mrs. Loveplumb is evident, from a speech of Mr. Loveplumb, which, without a blush, we were permitted to hear, because he was actually leaving the chamber—placing one hand on the knob of the brass lock, and the other against the door-post, he said—

" Why, as to influence, and interest, and " all that, 'tis mere chance-work, you " know; and, as to reward or remunera- " tion, if ever it should come, it may be " a long while first:—for, with respect " to the fifty pound note inclosed in the " letter, that might be a mere *decoy* to " take the matter in hand. However, as " we say on a privateering speculation— " 'Nothing venture nothing gain.' So, " as the child won't be able to eat and " drink a great deal for some years, nor " cost a great deal for clothes, on account " of Harriett's old things doing for her; " and as we shall save the expense of " *wax dolls*, and a parcel of *nick-nacks*, " by giving the girl a young child to play " with; why—I think—we may as well " keep it. At all events, I won't be at " the expense of advertising in the d——d " extravagant newspapers. Besides, it

"would answer no good purpose now, it "seems, and might set the people against "us, instead of making them our friends. "No, no, we will even keep it; and so "I leave that part of the business entirely "to you."

If such a speech does not indicate a complete victory gained over such a man, we will readily confess that we know not what victory means. It is evident that Mrs. Loveplumb so appreciated it. She felt that she had identified the fate of the darling infant with that of her own dear child, during her minority at least; and her bosom thrilled with ineffable satisfaction on the happy occasion.

Anxious to behold the pretty orphan, Mrs. Loveplumb rose somewhat earlier than usual, in order to get what further

intelligence might be possible, before Mr. Loveplumb came in to breakfast. But, to all the questions which mother or daughter could put, as to who or what she was—“ *Lizzy!* your *Lizzy!*” was the sole reply;—except, that she would sometimes add—“ *O'Mar.*” Foiled in every prospect of farther intelligence, the amiable lady resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and arrange her information to the best of her abilities. Therefore, on her husband entering the room, she introduced the lovely child by the name of *Eliza O'Mara.*

“ Umph! 'tis a fine child enough,” said Mr. Loveplumb; “ and, if we were “ but sure—but, perhaps, the parents “ may be as good as their words. So, as “ it seems pretty good natured, we must “ make the best of a bad bargain.—There

"there—there's a good child;"—for the infant was smiling in his face, and playing with his fingers.—"There, go with "Harriett to the nursery, and let us have "our breakfast in quiet."

This introduction having exceeded the amiable lady's most sanguine expectations, she was resolved not to mar an acquaintance so favourably commenced, by protracting the visit of the juvenile pair till it became troublesome; therefore, led the children to the door, and confiding them to the care of the proper servant, returned with a smile to officiate at the breakfast-table.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW EXQUISITELY DELIGHTFUL MUST THE CONFERRING OF A TRULY BENEVOLENT ACT FEEL TO THE CHARITABLE SOUL!

As the dispositions of both Lady Harriett and Eliza were of the most conciliating kind, the fond fervor of their first acquaintance soon settled into a firm and lasting affection, which "grew with their "growth, and strengthened with their "strength." They had scarcely a wish— but for the happiness of each other. It

was punishment, rather than pleasure, for the elder to pay a visit without the younger; and, if the former complained of the slightest indisposition, the sympathy of the latter was on the alert, and the most splendid spectacle lost all its brilliancy. Thus, loving and beloved, the amiable pair grew up, and were equally admired for beauty, for elegance of figure, and for the acquirements of education; until Eliza, by the estimation of Mrs. Loveplumb, had entered her twelfth year; when the clouds of discontent began to hover round the mansion, and threaten uneasiness and sorrow.

It unfortunately happened, that, in consequence of Eliza proving the most rapid grower, by the time she had entered her twelfth year, she had so evidently overtaken her lovely friend, in point of

height, that Mr. Loveplumb, who had yet heard nothing of her parents, nor received a shilling more towards remuneration, began to tremble at the idea of soon having to provide new clothes for her, instead of those left off by his daughter; which, he vainly imagined, had, hitherto, been the mode invariably pursued. This, he foresaw, would be attended with a very serious expense, as the girl advanced in years; and he might never get a farthing of the money. Such ideas frequently rendered him cloudy at table; and urgent with Mrs. Loveplumb, that, as the *girl* was big enough to earn her own bread, and no probability appeared of hearing any thing about her parents, it was high time she should begin to think of providing for herself. He thought it highly necessary that she should be put, *out of hand*, to some millener, or

matua-maker, for three or four years, by which means she might be enabled to become a useful member of society.

The amiable wife could say nothing as to the probability of hearing from Eliza's parents; on the contrary, she thought them dead; and, seeing her lovely *protegée* without claim on the family of her parents, the tender matron felt, that she, of course, stood in greater need of the friendship of others. *She*, therefore, would be her friend, though all the rest of the world forsook her.

It is universally allowed, that communication of griefs, or inquietudes of mind, tend, in some measure, to their amelioration. But Mrs. Loveplumb had no faithful disinterested bosom to deposit her cares in. True, Harriett was fifteen, and

one of the tenderest and most amiable, as well as most sensible of her sex :—so was the dear forsaken Eliza. But it would be cruel to torture the poor *orphan* with the apprehension of dangers, which, at the worst, she, herself, could still keep at some distance from the lovely creature: and, even to hint at her father's intentions to her own dear child, would drive the sweet girl into distraction! In such a dilemma, the good lady saw, that it was absolutely necessary, somewhat should be done—and done quickly, too, in order to place Miss O'Mara above the sphere of attraction of *milleners* and *mantua-makers* ;—even beyond the danger of Mr. Loveplumb's prudential dismission. She possessed forty thousand pounds in the five per cents, which, although her husband used, *sans ceremonie,* to convert the interest of to his own use, was, by

her marriage-settlement, at her own disposal. She had, indeed, intended to have divided the sum equally between her son and daughter; but Mr. Loveplumb was becoming immensely rich, and, of course, the dear boy would be so amply provided for, that, in a case so essentially necessary to the happiness of the most amiable and lovely orphan existing, he, no doubt, would deem *her blessing*, and a legacy of half that sum, quite sufficient; at least, he ought to do so, for she had been a tender and indulgent parent to him: and she was sure that she should receive a thousand blessings from her Harriet, for so sharing her *little* fortune among them.—It should be so.—It was just that it should be so. The lovely creature had been brought up, and educated, to encourage expectations somewhat above the class of *milleners* and

mantua-makers; and it would be barbarous, as well as illiberal, to raise the ideas of a tender female to independence, if not to affluence, and then plunge her into the vortex of the vulgar, after having, by such indulgence, deprived her of the requisite weapons to protect herself with.

In the amiable mind, when once a benevolent resolution has been seriously formed, every human impulse urges to its completion; consequently, in a case so apparently requisite to her own internal quietude, as well as to the placing a beloved *orphan* above the frowns of fortune, we cannor wonder that Mrs. Loveplumb should have lost no time in privately attending her solicitor; and, by her last will, so disposing of her property, between her dearly beloved daughter—her son—and the amiable daughter of her adoption.

In fact, she evinced such peculiar anxiety, until the affair was finally arranged, that even Mr. Loveplumb, who was not the tenderest of husbands, asked, more than once, *if any thing ailed her*. And, most providential for Miss O'Mara, was such anxiety; as, only three days after having executed the testament, on the fulfilment of which her heart had been so evidently fixed, the amiable parent and friend received an apoplectic stroke, which, in a few hours, dismissed her benevolent soul from its earthly tabernacle, to enter, unappalled, the celestial mansion of its smiling Maker!

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN WE CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY CONDUCT OF OTHERS, HOW READY WE ARE TO ATTRIBUTE IT TO INSANITY!

AFTER the paroxysm of grief, at the awful and sudden deprivation of the best of parents and friends, had a little subsided, in the breasts of our two young ladies, towards grateful reverence for her blessed memory, Mr. Loveplumb began seriously to reflect about easing the *heavy* incumbrance on his family, by recommending *Miss O'Mara to look out for*

herself, and *pave the way for her future subsistence*. He had no doubt but it was his wife's intention to have done something *handsome* for her, had she not been taken off so suddenly. Therefore, that he might fulfil her desire, he, actually, would *give the girl five hundred pounds!* and his advice as to what line she should pursue to procure a decent livelihood!

In acts of generosity Mr. Loveplumb generally evinced a kind of anxiety, somewhat similar to Macbeth, when meditating on murder—

——" If it were done, when 'tis done,
" Then it were well 'twere done quickly."

So it was with Mr. Loveplumb. He had made up his mind to give the *girl* five hundred pounds; and he longed to see both money and girl safe out of the house:

for, as to grief, sorrow, or heartfelt emotions, at the separation of two lovely and affectionate friends, who, from their infancy had been brought up together, those tender feelings had never once entered the head, much less the heart, of the man of business. He saw it was proper and economical so to proceed; and he was resolved speedily to carry his plan into execution. Soon after breakfast, therefore, on the fifteenth day after the funeral of Mrs. Loveplumb, while the young ladies were withdrawing from the parlour, the man of the world desired them to stop and sit down a little, having somewhat of importance to communicate; which, as they must soon know it, *the sooner it was out, the better*.

Observing a foreboding symptom of somewhat disagreeable, on the counte-

nances of the young ladies, he began to hesitate whether he should open the matter under such impressions, or defer it to a more favourable opportunity: but *Economy*, or some penurious *Being*, happening, at that instant, to give him a twitch on the part nearest his pocket, his resolution returned to its post; and he actually opened his mouth with intent to address himself, as concisely as possible, that the business might be the sooner adjusted, when the door was opened, and Mr. Nonplus, the solicitor of Mrs. Loveplumb, entered—to the great relief of the ladies, and no small surprise of the gentleman; who was puzzled to conceive what business the *lawyer* could possibly have with *him*.

After the usual complements of condolence, and some few sarcasms on the

news of the day, a pause ensued, which seemed to portend business of a nature not very agreeable to either party; during which, it occurred to Mr. Loveplumb, that, as giving away five hundred pounds was no trifling affair, so there was no necessity to secreet the light of such generous act under a *bushel*, when it certainly ought to blaze in the columns of every news-paper printed; but, as he knew that the benevolent acts of an *angel* could find no way into some of the papers, unless accompanied with the usual fee; and that such mode of procedure would be as bad *as gilding guineas*, he determined to lead the affair to the notice of Mr. Nonplus, flattering himself that, through such a channel, it would soon obtain ample promulgation. He, therefore, *hemmed* thrice, to rouse his audience to a proper degree of attention; and, ma-

king use of his handkerchief, thus proceeded—

"I was going, Mr. Nonplus, just as "you arrived, to open a matter which "concerns those young ladies, in some "measure; but Miss O'Mara in particular."

"A strange coincidence, Mr. Loveplumb!" said Mr. Nonplus, "as I, "myself, am come on a similar errand!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Loveplumb, "Why, surely you are not come to give "away five hundred pounds, too!—That "would be strange indeed, and lucky, "too!—Why, with your five hundred "and mine, the lady will possess a pretty "sum!"

"Why, I cannot say, Sir, that my "business here was to give any thing "away; nor, in fact, do I know any of "your family who are immediately in "want of it; or can, with tolerable pru- "dence, ever be in want of such a sum."

"Indeed, Mr. Nonplus! Then, per- "haps, you know somewhat about *the* "*little letter;* and somewhat about the "parties, perhaps."

"I can't say that I know any thing about "*a little letter*, Mr. Loveplumb; as "my knowledge here is confined wholly "to the *will*."

"Will!—Knowledge confined to the "will!—What will?"

"The *will*, Sir, that Mrs. Loveplumb

"executed at my chambers, three days "before she died; wherein she be- "queathed forty thousand pounds, in the "five per cents; one half to her dear "daughter, Harriett Loveplumb, and the "other to be divided equally between her "dear son and her young friend Eliza "O'Mara, or by whatever other name "she may hereafter be known to have "been legally entitled to."

"Divided between Harriett Loveplumb, "my son, and Eliza O'Mara!—A will, "properly executed!—duly attested!— "and so forth!—Why, all the d——"

"Yes, Sir; properly executed—duly "attested—and so forth. And the truly "amiable lady, well knowing the paternal "interest which you take in the welfare "of your daughter and son, and your

" friendly interest in that of the young
" lady's lovely companion, has appointed
" you sole executor—to receive the in-
" terest of such stock, and devote it to
" their support and education during their
" minority."

" Sole executor!—Interest!—Minority!
" Well, my dears, you had better with-
" draw, I think; and Mr. Nonplus and I
" will talk the matter over a little, and
" *lay our heads together about it.*"

The ladies, relieved from a violent oppression at their hearts, though they could not exactly tell why, readily paid their obeisance, and withdrew: and, as there was really very little to consult about, it was not many minutes before Mr. Nonplus retired also, followed by—" A d——d " busy meddling puppy!" mentally, said by the merchant.

After ten minutes serious reflection, Mr. Loveplumb felt convinced, that *the woman* must have been *mad* when she made such a will; though he would be still madder, in throwing more money away by setting lawyers to work to prove her so.—That, as the principal sum was now beyond his grasp, it would be ridiculous to refuse the interest, when he might have it for so many years, merely for keeping and educating his own children, and his daughter's *good-natured* companion, until they came of age;—for he would take care that none of them should touch the principal till they did come of age; and it was lucky, he thought, that the *mad-woman* had condescended to give him such indulgence. So thinking, Mr. Loveplumb resolved to act accordingly; and the young ladies, though not overburthened with his complaisance, received the strictest justice

aud parental affection during his life; which was terminated by the bursting of a blood-vessel, in the fourth year of his peerage, and a few days after Lady Harriett, having attained her twenty-first year, had taken up her residence in Grosvenor-Square; and taken Miss O'Mara as her most beloved, faithful, and inseparable companion.

CHAPTER X.

IN DISSIPATED TIMES, WHEN OUR STREETS ABOUND WITH ROBBERS OF MEN, AND ROBBERS OF WOMEN, HOW NECESSARY IT IS THAT MONEY AND BEAUTY SHOULD BE WELL PROTECTED.

DURING the residence of the ladies at the house of their parent and guardian, nothing very material occurred. Lady Harriett, whose fortune was of the tempting kind, had several proposals of marriage; some of which were very respectable, and some truly laughable and ro-

mantic. But, as none of those proposals had the happy art of touching her affections; and, as the father had his *veto* on constant duty, they soon glided away, and were no more thought of: and as the fortune of Eliza was not of the most *tempting kind,* and an honest, sturdy, wealthy Briton, though a man of the world, stood between her and personal insult, her time glided away without peculiar interest.

But, on the decease of their parent and guardian, the situation of the ladies became alarmingly altered. Some, who really admired Lady Harriett, laid so violent a siege to her heart; and others, who really admired her fortune, evinced such serious indications of carrying the *fortress* by storm, that it became absolutely necessary to look out for a protector

to insure her from inconvenience whenever stirring abroad. Nor was a protector less requisite to the personal safety of Eliza; for, though she had few men of fashion who coveted her fortune, she had many who coveted her person; and who flattered themselves, that a fine girl, elegantly educated, and knowing the sweets of luxury, with such a moderate pittance as ten thousand pounds only, might not be above the temptation of an *elegant house*, a *splendid equipage*, and *a few thousands per annum!* She, therefore, was, for some time, daily pestered with the illiberal proposals, directly made by great —great men; and with others, equally illiberal, though not qnite so indelicate, made by *great little* agents, and so forth; that she actually felt it prudent to seclude herself for some weeks:—as she had too often read, with astonishment and

indignation, what great men had *deigned* to do; and what little men had *dared* to do;—the one to indulge a vitiated appetite; the other to maintain an infamous ascendency, and satiate an impious ambition.

At length, through the intercession of her brother, the present Earl of Hankering, her ladyship agreed to accept the services of Sir William Vacant; but, on the positive understanding, that, at that instant, she saw no more in the baronet than in any other gentleman; and that, if, at the expiration of a year from her mourning for her parent, she could not yield him her heart, he should solemnly pledge his honour to relinquish all claims to her hand. This stipulation, as solemnly subscribed to, as a man, who, at the very instant, might have been thinking of

stumbling *Purleys* or negligent *grooms*, could possibly subscribe to an engagement of any kind, being duly acceeded to:—and a ferocious gentleman, who was distractedly in love with—the lady's fortune, being, in one of Sir William's lucid intervals, deprived of the tip of his right ear, by a ball from a real *Mortimer*, rendered her ladyship's situation tolerably safe and easy. And it being whispered abroad, at that auspicious juncture, not only that Eliza had politely, yet resolutely, refused *carte blanche* from a *gentleman*, whose person and proposals had ever been deemed irresistable, but had actually, through *him*, besought the protection of the *honourable world!* Also, that Lady Harriett's reiterated intreaties had obtained a pledge of honour from the the Earl of Hankering, to protect her lovely friend, at the risk of his life, while

she continued to reside with his sister;—she, too, felt herself relieved from the necessity of further seclusion.

So, restored from the apprehensions of compulsive matrimony on the one hand, and the horrors of compulsive seduction on the other, our pair of lovely friends, being of dispositions naturally cheerful, frequently indulged in visiting public places, particularly the theatres; where, yielding to a good-natured, though satirical propensity, they would amuse themselves in critical remarks on performers and performances, to their no small entertainment; and, sometimes, to the no small entertainment of the company who sat in the same box with them. In this amusement they were oftentimes joined by *two* gentlemen, the one elderly, the other young, who were almost always to be seen

in some part of the house, whenever the ladies attended there; and, generally, contrived to enter their box in the course of the evening. Those gentlemen, the ladies, between themselves, christened by the names of *Cato the Censor*, and *Juba*; and they fancied that such names were not unappropriate, the former being mild—placid—urbane; and, apparently, intent on leading the ladies, particularly Eliza, who was ever more copious in her remarks, to a subject which evidently yielded him great pleasure; and the more so, the more she enlarged in her observations. In such observations, generally made between the acts, the parties were seldom interrupted by Sir William; but, when it did so happen, it generally put a stop to them during the remainder of the evening, from the ladies being too much on the *titter* at Sir William's *bulls*,

as they used to term is strange inconsistencies, to be longer coherent. It was, usually, at such junctures, that the elder gentleman entertained them with his cynical opinion of men and manners; as the questions or observations of the others happened to present themselves; and, although they might not always yield the same portion of pleasure, they were seldom deficient in sound instruction.

To those of our Readers who are *lynx-eyed* in love-affairs, it may seem an object of desire to be informed what Sir William and the Earl said, or thought, of such frequent meetings, and such familiar conversations as those of the critical and satirical kinds generally are. We have, therefore, to observe to all those whom it may concern, that, although those gentlemen—*Cato* and *Juba*,

made it a matter of some importance to be of the party, in the box occupied by our amiable young ladies, they always behaved with the most perfect politeness, and, with such marked respect, that even the ladies themselves, who are seldom short-sighted in such cases, could observe no symptoms to encourage vanity, or sooth esteem of the more tender kind. As to Sir William, convinced that, though little known to him, yet, from being caressed by the first companies, they must be persons of consequence; also, perceiving in neither of them an attempt to the slightest familiarities; but, on the contrary, a kind of stubborn respect, which, he sometimes thought, looked a little like pride; conscious also, that their attention and conversation often shielded him from the lash of the ladies ridicule, when he happened to be *absorbed in*

reveries of importance, he rather re-joiced at such auspicious occurrences, than deemed them onerous to his influence. And, as to Lord Hankering, his ideas were not so wholly absorbed by anxiety for *loaves* and *fishes*, but he could easily perceive that the progress which the baronet had made in his sister's esteem was so little perceptible, as to be rather uncertain; so, should the young gentleman supplant him in her affections, as he had not a doubt but his fortune and connnections would bear the strictest investigation, he should get rid of the *fatigue* of such due and decent attention: and, if the young man's *penchant* tended towards Eliza, there investigation would be out of the question, and he would be happily relieved from attentions which he felt sometimes rather irksome to support; consequently his lordship would have been

happy had both been taken off his hands in an honourable way; and cannot be supposed to have evinced very irritable feelings at approaches—if approaches they might be called, so marked with profound respect, to which soever they were made. Thus the ladies were permitted to give a scope to their powers of raillery, in the presence of gentlemen whose conduct they admired, and whose refined manners and and superior understandings they revered, without a single observation from either *peer* or *baronet* :—and the gentlemen were permitted to converse with the ladies, and observe the bent of their inclinations, and the depth of their understandings—no doubt to the entertainment of all.—And thus we have, with all the precision in our power, and with the most perfect impartiality, brought up the rear of our history, to the arrival of the ladies in

Grosvenor Square, after their dinner at the Pack Horse; and at the end of the second month of the expiration of mourning for the first Earl of Hankering, her parents.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VERY IDEA OF EXTRA CAUTION EVINCES DANGER, OR IMPROPRIETY.

"THIS is the first time we ever saw "our *two* theatrical friends, except by "candle-light," said Eliza, after she and Lady Harriett had made several attempts at conversation, while tea was preparing; but without any success—" and, I must "confess, I don't think that day-light "improves them much in point of ap-"pearance."

" From the instant view we had of " them only," said her ladyship, " I cannot " help fancying that they appeared a little " in Sir William's way; for they were so " absorbed in contemplation, and were in " such great haste, that, I declare, *Pompey* had very near trod on *Juba* before " he could draw back for me to pass him. " Now, would I give five guineas to know " what they were thinking of."

" And I would double the sum," returned Eliza. " Not that I am anxious " to pry into the secrets of persons, almost strangers to us; but, I really " think, that their contemplation, and " eagerness of procedure, could not be occasioned by any trifling subject, or they " would have perceived us sooner. And " the intensity of thought may have made " their countenances appear somewhat " more unfavourable."

" Surely, they cannot be going to meet " any body in the park, on serious busi- " ness !"—And Lady Harriett sighed involuntarily, and blushed!

" Good Heavens! Lady Harriett, you " absolutely alarm me. How could you " entertain so gloomy an apprehension?" —and Eliza sighed involuntarily, and blushed also. " Ha!" continued she, " whatever the cause may be, it has had " an effect perfectly similar, as it hath " made us both look very ridiculous; and, " most fortunate it is, that we are alone; " for, I can plainly perceive, that your " ladyship is confused—and I feel, by " your look, that my appearance is not " more composed."

" Is it possible!" cried her ladyship.— " And both starting up at the same instant,

ran to the glass—looked at each other;—sighed, and sat down, more confused than before—" Poh! this is ridiculous, a couple " of love-sick girls could not act more " stupidly! As mere theatrical acquaint- " tances their conversation was, most cer- " tainly, very interesting; but, whatever " might have been the cause of their " solemnity of countenance, it should " affect us, as for slight acquaintance " only; as I am *almost* confident, from " their extreme guarded and distant re- " spect, they never meant to be thought " otherwise."

" I am of your ladyship's opinion there. " Yet I have sometimes thought that I " have heard a sigh escape the breast of " *Cato*, too fervid to be cynical; but " I could never catch his eye fixed on " any particular object at the moment;

"though I generally perceived that it was "observed by Juba, and soothed with a "look of apparent condolence."

"I, too, my dear Eliza, have made "observations somewhat similar; but, "not deeming them of any great con-"sequence at the time, they readily "escaped my memory."

"All is not gold that glitters," said Eliza, looking very wisely, and attempting a smile; which was faintly returned. "Perhaps the horizon of their lives may "be somewhat clouded, and they may "possess fortitude sufficient to enable "them to banish gloomy ideas, when "surrounded by the decorations, bustle, "and audience of a theatre. I will not "think that they can have rendered their "horizon dark by indiscretion; but,

" though it may not be improper to in-
" dulge in our usual conversations, as by
" that means we may be able to learn
" somewhat more of them; yet, I really
" think, we should be cautious of im-
" bibing ideas more favourable than a fur-
" ther acquaintance may warrant."

" Right! you are perfectly right, my
" love; I will, in future, take care to be
" upon my guard; and, I trust, you will
" have sufficient fortitude to be so, too:
" for, I must confess, that, hitherto, we
" have been a little *tardy*, and have left
" ourselves rather more to the care of
" *Fortune* than *Prudence*. In you, my
" dear Eliza, caution will be necessary to
" your future peace of mind. In me, it
" will not only be necessary to my peace
" of mind, but to my honour also; as,
" what would Sir William say!—What

" would my brother say!—What would " the world say! And what would you " say, if I, the older friend, commit- " ted myself in an act of indiscretion; " when I should, from superior age, and " presumed knowledge of the world, have " inculcated discretion in my dear Eliza— " should she have suffered her ideas to " have strayed improperly, even for a " moment!—But enough of this *nonsense*, " my dear—let us drop the subject, and " think of a cup of tea. Where can the " earl be all this time? He promised to " be with us before the tea was ready. " If so I rather think he must make haste. " —Do ring the bell."

CHAPTER XII.

STRANGE DISCOVERIES HAVE FREQUENTLY BEEN EFFECTED THROUGH MERE CURIOSITY; AND SERIOUS QUARRELS HAVE OFTEN ARISEN FROM INADVERTENT EXPRESSIONS, OCCASIONED BY A MOMENTARY ABSENCE OF MIND.

WHY a noble peer should not be punctual to his promise, and eager in his attendance on his sister, and her *protegée*, on whom he had no actual design; unless he really wanted a dish of tea, and found his sister's house as handy, and her tea-equipage as good, as that of her neigh-

bours, can raise very little curiosity now-o'-days; consequently, will not claim a thought from more than half a dozen of our Readers. But, as we are not of that class of *egotists*, who, because we *deign* to write, deem it a duty incumbent on every one to read our wonderous work; on the contrary, are willing to concede that some readers might *(though not without much difficulty)* find opportunities of being better employed; we, therefore, esteem it a kind of favour to have our work perused; and would be very sorry, if even so small a number as half a dozen were at a loss for any intelligence which we could communicate.

To those then, if any there be, who have the slightest wish to learn why the Earl of Hankering was not punctual to his engagement, we have the pleasure to

say, that his lordship and the baronet had not proceeded farther than the Pultney Hotel, and just entered into a serious conversation with Lord Splash, who was going into that elegant mansion, when several people ran past them, to see *the beautiful lady taken out of the Serpentine River.*

The confused *buz*, of a beautiful lady taken out of the Serpentine River, had an effect even on the auricular nerves of Sir William; and feeling himself, as well from the doctor's emollient, as from the exercise of riding, much easier than when he left the Pack-Horse, he proposed to his lordship to return, and take a view of the beautiful lady, which his lordship signified his immediate assent to, by wishing Lord Splash a good afternoon, and turning his horse about.

Five minutes brought our equestrians to the banks of the river, which seemed peculiarly forsaken, both by ladies and gentlemen; and its surface unruffled even by the whispering breeze. They gazed up the river—down the river—across the river—and into the river, but no beautiful lady could they see; nor any beautiful lady even within their view! There was an old woman, indeed, with a basket of biscuits, who offered her ware to the attention of the gentlemen; but they disdained her humble applications, though they readily condescended to ask if any person had recently been taken out of the river.

"O yes! God bless your honours!" cried the poor old woman, whose humility might have put the disdain of the *great folks* a little to the blush—"The beau-

"tiful lady has been *lugged* out of the "river this half hour! And they have "carried her away at last, with all her "fine clothes, and watches, and rings, "and so forth, to Mount Street *work-"house*, to see if they can coax a little "life into her again; for she wa'n't quite "cold; though she looked as *dead as a "nit* for the matter o' that."

Having gallopped round to Mount-Street-workhouse, they saw the two gentlemen, Cato and Juba, coming down the steps. The usual respecful salutations having passed, our equestrians were informed, that the *medical men* had been particularly successful in their exertions to effect resuscitation; for, although they had very little hopes, at the commencement of their endeavours, the unfortunate person had evinced signs of returning

life in little more than ten minutes. And when they (Cato and Juba) left the room, she could actually move her limbs.

After a second effort from Lord Hankering, to make himself understood by Sir William, they dismounted, and were conducted to the room by the other two gentlemen :—there they looked at the lady—then at the gentlemen—then at the medical men—then at each other; and then exclaimed—" Pity !—Sorry !— " Shocking !—unfortunate affair !—lucky ! " —glad !—happy !—fortunate recovery !" When, wishing their polite conductors good evening, they mounted their horses; and the baronet still feeling better and better, our equestrians soon rode to Grosvenor Square, and alighted just as the tea-quipage was conveyed into the drawing-room.

"Yes; charming countenance, to be "sure, my lord," said Sir William, while bowing to the ladies.—"But there must "be somewhat at the bottom of the busi- "ness, to have made her act so des- "perately."

Being seated, and the tea served round, Lady Harriett, who, as well as Eliza, had distinctly heard the conclusion of Sir William's speech, made two *decent* efforts to recall the subject to the baronet's recollection, but in vain; therefore, after waiting a minute or two, Miss O'Mara took up the business; and, addressing herself to the earl, hoped that none of his female friends had met with any accident.

"O no, Miss!" said his lordship;— "some unfortunate young women, no

"doubt, though very handsome, and "very elegantly dressed, took it into her "head, I suppose, to try the balmy ef-"fect of a watery grave.—The Serpentine "River has abounded with such *fish* this "year, I think; and, it is not impro-"bable, she may feel herself mightily "offended at having been brought to life "against her own inclination."

"Heavens, my lord!" exclaimed Lady Harriett, "can your feelings be so *neu-"tralized* as to associate the ideas of a "beautiful creature, very elegantly dressed, "and nearly drowned, to that of *a fish!* "It is but too probable, that, let the un-"happy person be whom she may, she "owes her first act of degradation to the "perfidious blandishments of your sex; "the least you *all* can do then, is to "speak of her with compassion."

"Why, I am not certain as to that, "Harriet. Indeed, I am sometimes in-"clined to think that our sex is as often "decoyed into acts of seduction, as your's "dishonourably seduced; but, as our backs "are broadest, you take care to lay the "burthen upon us."

"O, you monster!—But as this is not "the only subject on which we differ, "my lord, I am the less astonished at "your profane sentiments. However, I'll "try again what I can make of Sir Wil-"liam; he, I hope, possesses a few more "*grains* of human kindness and commis-"seration.—Pray, Sir William, did you "learn who was the perpetrator of the "ruin of so beautiful a creature?"

"The Duke of G——, Madam," answered the baronet, with great facility.

"The Duke of G——!" exclaimed her ladyship, apparently very much shocked.

"The Duke of G——!" exclaimed Eliza, not less shocked than her amiable friend.

"D—n it! that's impossible!" cried the earl—"the Duke of G—— is both an "old man and a very good man.—O no! "you must be misinformed, depend upon "it."

"Positively fact! I assure your lord-"ship," said Sir William, looking about him—"No nobleman in the United King-"dom so famous of late!—Why, you "look, ladies, and so does my lord, as "if you doubted my assertion. But take "a peep at the *calendar*—that never errs.

"There you will see that his grace has "brought out no less than *three beautiful* "*ones* within the last three years—all "*first-rates*, too!"

Eliza felt warm; for his grace had, more than once, treated her with the most respectful kindness; therefore she could not help saying—"Pretty *calendars*, in-"deed! They ought to be burnt by the "hands of the common executioner: and, "had a stranger made the assertion, I "certainly should have contradicted him. "—There is somewhat so directly oppo-"site to what every body sees—hears—"and understands of that truly amiable "nobleman."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! My dear Miss "O'Mara! Why, your veneration of an "old noble friend, makes you become an

"absolute *partisan!* But, give me leave "to ask—does not every body knows "that the duke is an old sportsman?"

"An old *sportsman*, do you call him, "Sir William?" said Eliza.

"An old *sportsman*, indeed!" cried Lady Harriet at the same instant.

"Aye, ladies, an old sportsman! Can "you doubt it? Didn't he bring out the "beautiful Godiva?—the finest *filley* that "ever walked over a *course!*—Didn't he "breed Bothesda, that had nearly dis-"tanced the whole field? And can you "not have fifteen hundred to a thousand, "as often as you please, on the Atalanta, "in the next New Market Meeting?—"Then—"

An absolute *horse-laugh* from the ladies dissevered the line of Sir William's stud, or he might, possibly, have evinced to the admiring party, that his grace was the identical *breeder* aud *bringer-out* of a string of beautiful *fillies* as long as New-Market Heath.

" Ha, ha, ha, ha!" roared the earl, after the ladies had ceased—" Why, what " in the name of common sense, has the " Duke of G——'s breeding the *Godiva*, " *Bethesda*, and *Atalanta*, fillies, to do " with seducing the *beautiful creature* " *taken out of the Serpentine River in* " *Hyde Park?*"

" The Duke of G—— seduce the beau- " tiful creature!—I'll bet the long odds " against that," cried the astonished baronet.—" By Heaven, I would as soon

"believe that his grace's *fillies* can fly!—
"Pray, my lord, who told you so?"

Another hearty laugh, with a few questions and replies, produced an eclaircissement; when it appeared, to the perfect re-establishment of his grace's moral character, that Sir William had, somewhat *mal-apropos*, indeed, associated the idea of the beautiful creature *taken out of the Serpentine River*, with the beautiful creature, on whose superior speed *fifteen hundred to a thousand* might be had as often as you pleased, for the famous match to be decided at the next Newmarket Meeting.

CHAPTER XIII.

IF A MAN HAPPENS TO APPEAR ANXIOUS FOR THE SAFETY OF A FEMALE, HE MUST BE IN LOVE WITH HER OF COURSE, ACCORDING TO THE LADIES CREED.

ON young ladies, whose bosoms possessed no small portion of the milk of human kindness, it may readily be supposed that the account of a beautiful creature, taken from the Serpentine River; elegantly dressed too, and revived by medical aid, in Mount-Street Workhouse, made a deeper impression, than, in com-

pany, they might deem it necessary to evince. However, on retiring to rest, they gave especial charge for the unfortunate person's health to be enquired after early in the morning, that they might receive the intelligence on coming down stairs.

On coming down stairs, therefore, the two lovely friends were informed, that the lady had experienced a tolerable night, but was a little incoherent.

Such an account of the state of an interesting creature, equally affected the humanity and curiosity of the amiable pair. Similar enquiries were frequently made, with nearly similar answers; but, on the third morning, with the answer that the lady was much better.—The pro-

found respects of the two gentlemen, *Cato* and *Juba*, were received also.

Thunderstruck at such a message, they were, for some moments, speechless.—That those gentlemen should appear interested in a beautiful and interesting creature, was a subject of no trifling consideration, or agitation either.—"It is "very odd," said her ladyship, cracking a cup, by letting it slip through her fingers.—"It is very mysterious," said Eliza, complaining of the tea being so remarkably hot as actually to have scalded her mouth.—"I would not wish to entertain "unfavourable impressions of those gen-"tlemen," said her ladyship, "at least "until I knew somewhat more of the "affair, because hasty judgements are "often erroneous."

"I never thought the countenance of "*Juba* betrayed the heart of one of those "unprincipled wretches called *Gay De-* "*ceivers*," observed Eliza. "At all "events, it may be necessary to be cau- "tious the next time we happen to meet "those gentlemen; and to scrutinize their "words and actions minutely."

"I cannot conceive it possible, my "dear Eliza, that they can be implicated "in this unfortunate person's case, and "yet presume, from the very spot, and "knowing of our enquiries, to accompany "the answer with their *profound respects.* "No!—that cannot be. All the effron- "tery of man could never bear them out "in such hypocritical impudence."

"For my part, my lady, I must con- "fess I have my doubts.—Pray, William,

" did you observe those gentlemen at the " workhouse before this morning?" said Eliza, to the servant who had made the enquiries, and then came in for the tea-things.

" He was generally there in the morn-" ing, madam, and yesterday evening, " too."

" Then it is evident that *they* must " be implicated," continued Eliza, so soon as the servant left the room. " And a " beautiful creature might have lost her " life through their infidelity—or the in-" fidelity of *one* of them at least. How " dangerous it is to trust to appearances! " How delusive are the countenances " of some men!—But, are we sure " that the *woman* is free from blame, " all this time?—If she should not—

"but let me not judge too precipi-
"tately."

"True, my dear Eliza. At all events, "let us investigate the matter fully be- "fore we attempt to pass judgement. "To-morrow, you know, we are to dine "at the Countess of Tattle's. There "we shall be sure of opportunities for "probing this affair to the bottom; as "it must become public by that time, "though I do not yet see it in the "papers. It will be wonderful, indeed, "if a beautiful creature, elegantly dress- "ed, can be taken from the Serpen- "tine River, and re-animated at Mount "Street-workhouse, without the whole "affair being circumstantially known by "Lady Tattle, or some of the party; "—on the fourth day, too. Therefore,

" let us drop the subject for the present, " and amuse ourselves a little in the " music-room. It will not be amiss if " we practice our last duet, as I have " not a doubt but we shall be called " on for it; especially if the Marquis " Fal-lal should be there."

From all which, it might easily be perceived, that neither lady was capable of judging impartially; consequently, it was with no small degree of propriety, that both of them determined not to pass sentence precipitately. Though, if we might venture to hazard an opinion, as to which was most influenced by *indignation,* at the apparent culpability of one, or both, of those gentlemen, we, certainly, should incline to the side of Miss O'Mara; as her apprehensions seem-

ed somewhat more personal than those of Lady Harriett.—Not but there was quite sufficient to be observed on both sides.

CHAPTER XIV.

CURSE ON THE NEWSPAPERS FOR BABBLING SCANDAL!---CURSE ON THE NEWSPAPERS FOR NOT BABBLING SCANDAL!

On the following day the party met rather early at Lady Tattle's; and full ten minutes were occupied in warm debate, whether the redoubted champion of *Liberty* had actually committed himself or not. The young ladies, with whom the champion's person seemed a favourite object, were loud in his defence, and would have readily voted him immacu-

late; while those in whom the hey-day of the blood had a little subsided, were outrageously loyal, and would have voted him black as a crow! The gentlemen maintained a kind of silent but significant neutrality; the young ones, every now and then, giving a smile of encouragement; while the old ones evinced their sensations by as frequently indulging a shake of the head; so that, when dinner was announced, the matter seemed not a wit nearer final adjustment *within doors*, than it was likely to be *without*.

During the dinner, the little asperities left on the minds, by warmly supporting a political contest, became smoother and smoother, as the plates were replenished; so much so, indeed, that, by the time the desert appeared, all the parties were

prepared to enter into conversation with perfect good humour.

"Not a tittle, my dear," said Lady Blab Audible, in answer to a whisper from Miss O'Mara, on the subject so seriously handled the day before.—"Pray "has any one heard of a beautiful crea-"ture, elegantly dressed, being taken "from the Serpentine River, and re-ani-"mated at Mount-Street-workhouse, four "days ago?"

"No, no, no, no, no!" was echoed round the room.

"What!" exclaimed an elderly gentleman—"a lady taken out of the Ser-"pentine River, and resuscitation ef-"fected, four days ago, and not a sylla-"ble of the matter in the newspapers

"yet! Can this be possible!—Who is "she?"

The short question, at the conclusion of the gentleman's speech, gave a truce to admiration by rousing curiosity. All eyes were fixed on Lady Harriett and Eliza, who, to do them justice, were as circumstantial in their information as female eloquence would permit:—warmed into superior exertion, very probably, by the silent applause of looks—nods—and gesticulations, so plentifully bestowed on them by their noble auditors.

As a torrent long dammed up, after silently accumulating until it perforates the mound, will rush forward with increased rapidity and roar; even so did it occur with the party at Lady Tattle's. For Eliza, who certainly had been the

most voluble in her information, had r sooner declared, that she believed th company had received all the intelligenc on the mysterious subject, which it was ir her power or Lady Harriett to communicate, than millions of questions withou answers—suggestions without probability —and conclusions without proof, were so bandied about—and so confusedly, that nothing like a regular conversation could be thought of, until the appearance of coffee.—Then clamour being silenced for the moment, became somewhat controulable, and some few were found, who, fatigued by their efforts to re-inforce their arguments, on a subject so wonderfully enigmatical, were content to become hearers.—Still was every effort at developement urged in vain; and all the *pros* and *cons* tended but to render *confusion more confounded!* At length, after porin

over numberless columns, and wading through the immensity of paragraphs in a mountain of papers, without a single gleam of intelligence on so strange a subject; the elderly gentleman, shutting up his spectacles very leisurely, loudly exclaimed—"By G—d, they have bought "up the papers!"

"As, when a flock of sheep, alarmed at some strange object, defies the drover's bawls, and shrill acclaim, to urge them on; but, if one single animal, by *dog* or *stick*, be roused to leap the fearful spot, the rest of the fleecy drove, eager to emulate so proud a *feat*, bound after; and, with seeming exultation, soar through the buoyant air:—even so, again, did the party at Lady Tattle's elucidate my simile. —"It must be so!—It must be so!—It "must be so!—It must be so!"—Met,

jostled, and huddled, each other, in every corner of the room—when, virulently consigning the *papers*—the *editors*—even the *press* itself, to fell perdition!—they resolved, late as it was, to make the most of the evening; and to supply the place of such *prostituted trumpery*, by each becoming a *c*[illegible] intelligence so important—so mysterious—and so shamefully muffled up in the veil of secrecy!

CHAPTER XV.

MAY NOT MANY, ACCUSED OF SUICIDE, HAVE MET THEIR DEATH BY ACCIDENT?

AFTER a night, in which several moments truly anxious, were succeeded by peals of laughter, from our lovely *inseparables*, at the recurring ideas of hurry and bustle, which their *Serpentine-River tale* had caused among their kind communicative friends; no doubt to the disturbance of many domestic families; our

ladies arose; and, even before they had taken breakfast, found it necessary to be *denied*, having already received no less than five visits from merely distant friends, purely for the purpose of getting a few chasms appropriately closed, which the *patriotic substitutes* for the *venal newspapers*, had left open in their hasty details of the preceding night! No sooner, therefore, had the ladies finished breakfast, than they repaired into one of the front parlours; and, under cover of the window blinds, enjoyed themselves in making observations on the evident tokens of disappointment which instantly took place in the features of the busy inquirers, on being informed, that the *ladies* were—*not at home!*

For several hours the *porter* was kept on severe duty; and the rapid succession

of carriages reminded the spectators of some public *levee*, or early *de jeune*. About two o'clock the poor fellow got a little time to breathe; and, about a quarter after, an elegant carriage drove up, which the ladies not recollecting any thing of, were rather anxious to become acquainted with; so, ordering the porter to admit the company, they hastened into the drawing room.

Immediately a lady of elegant form and features, but evidently a foreigner, by the contour of her beauteous countenance, entered the room. A slight suffusion overspread her face, as she approached the ladies; but soon yielded to the paleness of apparent indisposition. After a few compliments had passed, to the familiar introduction of the enchanting *trio*,

the lady, again slightly blushing, said she came to make her most grateful acknowledgements to the ladies for their amiable and repeated enquiries after her health during her recent illness, which she was duly informed of by her careful attendants.

The ladies gazed on each other, and experienced an awkward sensation rather unusual to them, whose thoughts were as pure as their faces. They recollected no *bulletin* of health having been issued by any family with whom they were acquainted; nor by any other from whom they had a right to expect a *personal* acknowledgement, any more than the rest of the inhabitants of a whole empire; nor were they conscious of having made inquiries of any kind after a lady of such

apparent distinction, and a total stranger. They *hemmed*—hesitated—and appeared at a loss.

The lady perceiving their little embarrassment, relieved them with a truly conciliating smile, by informing them, that it was impossible, from her source of information to be mistaken ; but, as it was not customary to issue *bulletins* of health from a *poor-house*, the escape of such charming conduct from their recollection, was easily to be accounted for. That, from the evident effect which such amiable enquiries had on her speedy recovery, she was convinced they possessed no small degree of influence on minds disturbed :—that, of course it was a great pity such truly beneficent conduct was not emulated by all the happy and affluent part of the sex ; and that, for her part, she

should ever be proud to boast of the infinite obligations which she felt herself under to such a charming pair; and trusted the felicity she would derive from their acquaintance in future, would be infinite.

The lady might have continued her oration much longer, without the least fear of interruption either from Lady Harriett or Eliza. Their minds were too intensely occupied by the novelty of the visit—the delicacy of the subject—and, though last not least, the influence which such a form, such features—such accomplishments, might—must—have had on Juba! Nor was it until the lady had been silent a full minute, that they could sufficiently command their attention, as to felicitate her on her happy escape from a most horrid death, by the speedy and

providential exertions of the *faculty*; deplorable as the accommodations must have been.

" As to the accommodations, ladies, at
" Mount-Street-workhouse, I assure you,
" from experience, they are by no means
" so uncomfortable as I had pre-conceived,
" or as many thousands imagine. But,
" with respect to the early, and, conse-
" quently, successful exertions of the
" medical gentlemen, who attended me,
" I have *directly* to thank the humane
" inerference of *two* gentlemen, for whom
" I shall never cease to feel the most
" fervent respect and gratitude; and *in-*
" *directly* to thank *you*, ladies, under
" whose all-commanding influence those
" gentlemen acknowledge to have acted."

This was adding confusion to the con-

founded, with a vengeance! To be thanked for influence which they were inconscious of even attempting to exert; and, in behalf of a lady, too, whom, in their consciences they would not have been sorry if they had never seen or heard of, or her accident either, was a flight beyond their utmost fancy; so that they could only wonder, and receive such thanks with silent complaisancy.

But, although our two lovely friends felt it necessary to be silent—as to the influence used, they could not long refrain from expatiating on the accident itself; in which they had nearly committed themselves again; for, on qualifying their curiosity, by deprecating the horrors of suicide, and the pangs of the mind which could cause so desperate a resolution, the lady, with another sweet conciliating,

smile, interrupted their declamations, by saying—

"True, ladies, suicide is dreadful!—
"and dreadful must, in general, be the
"state which can induce a propensity to
"such a desperate act; but, when the
"mind has been somewhat roused by
"violent irritation, a series of mere trifles
"may, I fear, produce those melancholy
"effects at which all moral men must
"shudder: and I am sorry—not ashamed,
"ladies, that I am an innocent, unwit-
"ting example, in corroboration of my
"argument. I cannot help saying, I felt
"myself severely offended the day pre-
"vious to my accident; and, on rising
"in the morning, I still felt my bosom
"very uneasy; as I conceived the offence
"to be of great magnitude, though levelled
"at a friend—for I much esteem her.

"On that day I had promised to dine
"with a friend at Kensington, and, the
"weather being fine I resolved to walk
"there. Finding myself a little teazed
"with the tooth-ache, which rather in-
"creased with walking, I called at an
"apothecary's in Piccadilly, and desired
"the young man to give me a few drops
"of laudanum on a piece of lint, in hope
"of easing the pain. Whether the young
"man, who seemed to mind *me* more
"than his business, had made the lint too
"moist or not, I will not presume to de-
"termine, but, such was the combined
"effect of pain, laudanum, and previous
"irritation of mind, that, by the time I
"had reached the bridge in the Park, I
"must have been absolutely delirious;
"when, seeing a cow come somewhat
"hastily from between the posts, towards
"me, my brain caught the idea of a *mad*

" *bull!* and, as the evil so apparently be-
" fore me immediately superseded all ideas
" of every other danger, I instantly threw
" myself over the iron-railing, and was
" plunged into the river. As several boys
" were near the spot, and gave alarm the
" moment the accident occurred, I was
" not, I am informed, more than ten
" minutes in the water, or a quarter of an
" hour at most: but I was, to all appear-
" ance, lifeless when brought to the bank
" of the river; and there, I am sorry to
" say, I was suffered to remain, from the
" ignorance of the people assembled, nearly
" another quarter of an hour, without any
" attempt being made to cause re-anima-
" tion. Happily, my *two* amiable friends
" then came up, through whose humane
" interference I was instantly removed to
" Mount-Street-workhouse, and, most for-
" tunately recovered. To them, ladies, and

" to your influence, I also owe the pro-
" bably preservation of the senses of my
" family: for I even now, tremble while
" thinking what their situation would
" have been had my misfortune been
" abruptly announced to them!—Those
" gentlemen, as soon as they saw me suf-
" ficiently recovered to announce my name
" and connexions, (for I had not got a
" single article about me, by which any
" but my acquaintances might have known
" me,) kindly hastened to open the me-
" lancholy affair with caution; and, lest
" there might have proved some culpabi-
" lity on my part, they heedfully procured
" the silence of the papers, until they
" could make further inquiries of me.—
" Thus, ladies, you have a hasty, artless
" tale of the accident which befell me;
" and, I trust, will now incline to believe
" with me, that *suicide*, or, more pro-

" perly speaking, *precipitated death*, does " not require so mighty an impulse, when " the mind has been previously irritated " by grief or displeasure. I was actually " innocent of the most distant intention " to injure myself; but, had I died, the " act of suicide would, no doubt, have " been universally attributed to me; and, " but too probably, a legion of stories " would have been invented, and surmises " entertained, to the prejudice of my " honour.—Good God! what then would " have been the distraction of my parents! " —my relations!—my friends! Judge " then, ladies, how infinite are my obli-" gations to *you*, and *your* friends!"

This little narrative of an accident, which had so nearly proved fatal—delivered with a most winning *naviette*, re-" lieved, entertained, and affected our

young friends in no trifling degree. They repeatedly felicitated the lady on her happy escape; and assured her, that they should ever deem those some of the happiest moments of their lives, which were devoted to inquiring after a person so truly interesting.

After some further conversation, the lady announced herself as the Marchioness de Piomberti: (which the porter not having properly heard, had omitted to mention,) reciprocal invitations being then sincerely given, and reciprocal promises of fulfilment as sincerely returned, the Marchioness departed.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN AN EVIL HAS BEEN ANTICIPATED, AND HOPES ARISE THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO AVOID IT, HOW ANXIOUS WE ARE TO ARRIVE AT CERTAINTY.

LADY Harriett Loveplumb was a very tolerable politician, and could appreciate the duties of dependence almost as accurately as a minister of state. She knew that where *place* and *pension* too, were in contemplation, attendance, as well as at-

tention, was incumbent; consequently, whenever she wished to be gallanted abroad, she concluded that her commands ought to be cheerfully obeyed by Sir William, without an immediate *doceur*: but, as her brother had neither *place* nor *pension* in expectancy from such attendance, she readily saw the prudence, as well as policy, of inducing those little, though essential, services, by the doceur of a good dinner and supper, when an opera, play, or concert, was in view; by which means she always found the promise of attendance more easily obtained, and actual attendance more punctually performed; and being generally, on those occasions, obliged to make some little addition to her table, she thought the consumption of an extra mouth would prove more advantageous by his company, than detrimental by the expense; so con-

stantly invited Sir William to take a chair at the same time.

As the ladies had made up their minds to visit the theatre on the evening next following the day on which they had been surprised by a visit from the Marchioness, they had issued their invitations to the earl, and their commands to the baronet, accordingly. In fact, they had a two-fold incitement to go on that evening: first, their two favourites, *Munden* and *Fawcett*, were to perform—one in the *British Fleet*, the other in *The Village Lawyer*; and, next, the sooner they had an opportunity of meeting their *two* friends, *Cato* and *Juba*, the sooner they would have the envelope removed from that unaccountable part of the marchioness's tale, where she informs the ladies, that, to them, she owes the humane and

critical interference of those *two* gentlemen at the water-side; which, with very short intervals, had occupied their thoughts ever since.

Indeed, it is a dreadful thing for ladies to have their curiosity so forcibly roused; especially when, in spite of themselves, they feel anxiety on the subject which they cannot possibly reconcile to strict prudence; and, at the same time, have the mortification to perceive, that, the more they investigate, the greater they find the obscurity. They had once caught at a *clue* from which they entertained very sanguine hopes of success.—They fancied that the information of the gentlemen must have been enigmatical; and that the confessed influence must have originated in a similarity of form, features, and complexion;

but, after having twisted, twined, and twirled, the *clue* about, until it became more complex than when first caught at, they were compelled to sit down, fully convinced that there was not the slightest similarity, in either *form, feature,* or *complexion!*—The marchioness was tall—elegant—majestic;—*they* of the middle and *engaging* size. The features of the *marchioness* were of the Roman *contour;—theirs* of the *Grecian cast:* and the complexion of the marchioness was of a lively *brunette;* while *theirs* were of the colour of the skin of a fresh-laid egg-shell! Hence, all was confusion and perplexity in the minds of our lovely friends. Therefore, all their hopes of extrication, from such an ocean of mystery, were in candid communications from their respectful

friends, *Cata* and *Juba*; and, to the play they were determined to go, though their friends, and themselves, constituted the whole of the audience.

CHAPTER XVII.

HE WHO VENTURES TO JOIN A MOB CANNOT BE ANSWERABLE FOR THE MOMENT OF HIS ESCAPE.

CAN there be any thing more tantalizing and irksome to young ladies of rather acute feelings, than having their ideas continually anticipating the most favourable results from an early meeting, yet find their purposes retarded by the very persons, who, agreeably to their invitations, and promises of attendance, should have accelerated it.

Our lovely *inseparables,* desirous of being at the theatre by the commencement of the overture, that preparations might be duly arranged for the developement of what they deemed a mystery, before the rising of the curtain, had actually ordered dinner a quarter of an hour sooner than usual; not doubting that the earl would preserve his usual exactitude; and, naturally concluding, that, as usual, he would bring Sir William under his arm: but, to the dire discomfiture of the little innocent plot, the eagerly expected visitors were still to be expected at the end of half an hour after the dinner had been waiting for them!

As it is not to be presumed that a mere trifle could have detained the Earl of Hankering from a good dinner, known by him to have been ready full half an hour;

or to have detained Sir William from obeying the welcome mandate of the lovely object of all the attention he could possibly master on such an interesting occasion; we may, possibly, be looked up to for an explanation of such strange delay.

We, then, have to inform our readers, that his lordship and Sir William were true to their time as St. James's clock, until they reached the top of Arlington Street; when their attention was caught by an itinerant *show-man*, displaying a large *show-box*, in which he assured the bye-standers were the three *grandest scenes* that ever were exhibited in any country or any age; while a smart-looking young man, evidently to draw a concourse of people round the show-box, was, with his head on the saddle, and his

heels in the air, riding a sorrel horse, nearly worn out with age, but which attempted still to canter, caper, and curvette, to the no small entertainment of the ladies, who crowded the windows near the spot with their pretty inquisitive countenances; and, no doubt, gave the show-man sanguine hopes of a profitable exhibition.

His lordship and Sir William having smiled at, and commented on, the dexterity with which the young man maintained his equilibrium, and cut his capers with his heels uppermost; while his *Rosinante* cut capers full as curious with his heels below; were, at the end of five minutes, proceeding on their journey, and had actually moved several yards, when they were accosted by the Marquis of Lounge, Earl of Lounge, Lord Thomas

Lounge, the Honourable Thomas Lounge, and Thomas Lounge, Esquire, who had been *killing* half an hour in walking round Mr. Bullock's rare and extensive Museum of Natural Cusiosities, in Piccadilly, without *seeing* any thing:—sitting out the whole rehearsal of an excellent little opera, at the beautiful theatre, in Tottenham Street, without hearing any thing; —and sauntering, for another half hour, carelessly casting their eyes over Mr. Strochland's superb Collection of Paintings, at his excellent cabinet, the corner of Welbeck Street, without attempting to understand any thing!—The whole party, with several of the amiable relatives of the Lounge family, all assured them, that *Montefiasco* (for, it seems, they knew the show-man very well) was instantly going to exhibit three of the finest scenes that ever were exhibited in Europe; and that

it would be the vilest *bore* in nature, to lose such an entertainment merely because dinner was ready! when every body knew that none but corpulent aldermen, and starving commoners, ever dared, at the present day, to be punctual at a meal. Besides, as they were going to dine with ladies, they should, by all means, wait till the *show* was over, as it would give them a favourable opportunity of collecting conversation for a whole evening, by elucidating aud commenting on the wit and originality of *Montefiaco's* performance. Indeed, surrounded by so large a portion of the *Lounges*, as they, by that time, were, neither the earl nor Sir William could well escape; so, made a virtue of necessity; and, that they might really gain somewhat to amuse the ladies with, they determined to be as attentive as possible.

A shout from those standing more im-immediately round the *show-box* (who, most probably, had been indulged with *orders* to be present at so *glorious* an entertainment, and might have been instructed as to catching signals imperceptible to the generality of the spectators) announced the commencement of the performance; the young man having previously dismounted his horse and secreted himself in the *show-box*, while *Monsieur Montefiasco* was wiping all the apparatus of the face essentially necessary to vocal explanation, with a clean cambric handkerchief.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HE WHO RUNS MAY READ.

"HERE," cried *Montefiasco,* with a voice Stentorian, and in *French-English* and *English-French*—"Here you "have already see de vonderful dexterity "of de young gentilhomme; how he ride "upon de little capering, cantering—vat "you call in Irish Garron, vile standing "upon de head, vid out hurting his "prains! And how he perform all de little

" tricks and de fancies of de Purley de
" School, vid as mush ease as de great
" Robespierre could cut off de head of de
" friend vid de grand patriotique guillo-
" tine! Now, ladies and gentilhommes, I
" shall have de honeur to shew you von
" of de sublime scenes of de Jubilee year,"
—and pulling a small cord at the bottom
of the show-box, he resumed—" Dere,
" ladies and gentilhommes, dere you have
" see von grand theatre magnifique; how
" it rise like de fungus—de mushroom,
" from de smoaking ashes of de old barn!
"—Dere you see *Monseigneur Johnny*
" *Bull* and his friends; how dey resolve
" to treat de good, de gracious, and de
" beloved sovereign, and ver mush pro-
" mote his felicite, in de fiftit year of his
" glorious and difficult reign, by taking
" de theatre magnifique up in dere arms,
" and setting him down in de little park

" de Vindsor, for de amiration of de king
" —God de bless his majesty!—and de
" queen—God de bless her majesty!—
" and de beautiful princesses—God de bless
" dem altogeder! Den you see de grand
" consultation of *Monseigneur Johnny*
" *Bull* and his friends; how dey find de
" great theatre a little too heavy to run
" avay vid: and how dey tink it voud be
" no novelte to give a conflagration en
" second, nor no easy ting neider; be-
" cause de brick and de mortar be all over
" de house: so dey resolve to kick up de
" disturbance popularite every night after
" night, for de grand amusement, dat de
" newspapier may communicate de pleas-
" ing intelligence patrioque to all de
" familie royale every de next morning,
" and make dem all laugh at de comical
" frolique!—Den you see *Monseigneur*
" *Jonny Bull* and his friends, how, vid

"all dere hearts, and dere hands, and "dere feet, too, dey velcome dere fa- "vourites, Messieurs *Munden*, *Fawcett*, "*Jones*, *Blanchard*, *Incledon*, *Monsieur* "*John Kemble*, and *Charley Kemble*, "also, to de grand theatre magnifique, "every time dey come upon de stage, to "make dem laugh, or to make dem cry; "vid de warmest—vat you call—smoak- "ing-hot tokens of applause; and so loud, "and encore incessant, dat de ladies and "gentilhommes can hear noting to laugh "or to cry at, so are obligee to give de "credit for de ver great entertainment dey "voud have receive if de ver great ap- "plause vas not quite so loud and vocifer- "ous.—Dere you see de gentilhommes of "de Corps du Temple, who, having no "business for contemplation at home, do "come to de theatre manifique, to im- "prove dere moralite, and dere enuncia-

"tion, by see *Monsieur Shak-e-spear's*
"*Comedie et Tragidie* performed to de
"perfection, in—vat you call—de dummy
"de show. Some of de learned gentil-
"hommes do make dere grand entre into
"de theatre magnifique in de cap of de
"*night;* some in de cap of *liberte;* and
"some in de cap of de *fool!* to the ver
"great amiration of *Monseigneur Johnny*
"*Bull* and his friends! Den you see de
"placard territique, denouncing vengeance
"on de proprietors, for daring to spend
"dere own money demselves ven *dey*
"could have lay it out to so mush more
"avantage.—Den you see anotre flaming
"placard—all black and de vite, tretning
"to send de proprietors a la diable! for
"making de snug little box for dere
"friends, ven dey ver vell knew dat
"*Monseigneur Johnny Bull* and his
"friends, had, from dere infancy, been

"ver partial to open-house being kept, "every vere, all de year round, for dere "accommodation.—Den you see de grand "dance de *O. P.*, and de grand dancers "de *O. P.* also!—Dere you see de capers, "de gestures, de attitudes most elegant! "And den you hear de harmony most "ravishment! All performed vid mush "more eclat as ever was performed by any "of *Monseigneur Johnny Bull's* respec-"table relations, in *de sand-pits du Wool-"wich*, or at *Horn-Fair!*—Den you see "de grand reconciliation over de roast-"beef of Old England, and de vin du "Oporto!—But as dat little cordialite "vas not quite de ting, in point of mag-"nificence, vit de rest, I vil beg de leave "to omit de representation for de present, "and here drop a de curtain over de first "grand scene of—God de bless his Ma-"jesty's Jubilee Year!"

Here a pause of two minutes occurring, the earl and Sir William would gladly have made their escape, well knowing that they had already been expected for some time in Grosvenor Square; but neither they, nor the family of the *Lounges*, surrounded as they were, could venture to retreat until the whole of the representation had closed, without running the hazard of being insulted by the populace, who did not seem in a humour to be disturbed, merely to accommodate a parcel of gentlemen, who, if they didn't intend to see the whole of the *fun*, had no business there at all. So, wisely concluding that, by patiently remaining a few minutes longer, they might possibly preserve themselves from insult, and that the ladies would readily deem their account of the situation they were allured into, a sufficient apology for the delay, they

reconciled themselves to wait and be attentive.

Having thrice used his cambric handkerchief, and thrice enjoyed the pleasure of a dry face, *Monsieur Montefiasco,* with a voice even louder than before, first pulling another cord at the bottom of the *show-box,* roared out—" Here, ladies and " gentilhommes, you have a magnifique " representation of Piccadilly all in de " uproar; also de park; and de little " canal dat do so ver mush mischief " to de pretty girls dat tumble demselves " into de vater in fit de desperation.— " —Dere you see de pretty shildrens of " of *Monseigneur Johnny Bull* and his " friends, vid dere little hands full of de " mut, treating dere papas vid de little " anticks of—vat-you-call—pelting de

" coashmans, and de footmans, vidout
" side de coashes, becanse dey forget to
" pull off dere hats to dere high-mighti-
" nesses; and dey pelt de ladies vidin side
" de coashes, because dey forget to pull
" off dere *heads* to dere high-mightinesses.
" —Dere dey continue de pretty enter-
" tainment, day after day, vidout being
" fatigue, or sick; but, vid dere little
" mutty hands, encore de frolique; though
" some of de little *dears* be vidout de
" stockings, or de shoes; vile de grand
" folks at de Coffee-House du Gloster,
" never once subscribe so mush as von
" single shilling to present the darling
" shildrens vid de nice little piece of de
" rope, or de cane, or de horse-whip, for
" all de trouble dey had give demselves,
" and all de mut dey had give to oders!—
" Dere you see de grand serjeant; how he
" ride upon de beautiful black horse, vid

" de pistols in de holsters—how he go up " to de castle-gate of a young gentil- " homme, and tell him dat he come dere " according to de appointment; but de " young gentilhomme, he—sly—sly— " peep through de key-hole, and he sing " de funny little bit of de song, about— " *Call again to-morrow!—Call again* " *to-morrow!*—Den you see de grand " gentilhommes, vid de head full of de " sagacite; dey have de consultation to " know vat dey can do if de young gen- " tilhomme vill encore—*Call again to-* " *morrow*, and no open de door for de " grand serjeant: vile de young gentil- " homme, he laugh in de sleeve of his " coat, and he tink dey can do noting at " all.—Den you see *Monseigneur Johnny* " *Bull* and his friends, dey have de con- " sultation too, about vat dey can do for " de good of dere country, and to gif de

"grand eclat extempore. Ven a little "cunning fellow, voo have de great deal "mush glass in de house, and vant to "dispose of little great deal of it; he give "his consultation vid mush visdom;— "he say dat dey ought to do someting "ver noblement patriotique to make de "newspapier chronicle dere achievements, "to de infinite surprise and approbation "of de grand posterite.—Den he say dat "ver many great gentilhommes have de "audacite not to illumine de vindows ven "dey, de majestie of de peoples, do call "for de lights, and, by gar! he voud "give de consultation for de good of de "fine country, to break all de vindows of "sush audacite gentilhommes, all over "every vere.—Den you see *Monseigneur* "*Johnny Bull* and his friends, dey run "a-la-patriotique all de vay to de square "du St. James, and de square du Berkley,

" and dey break all de vindows of de great " audacite gentilhommes; and de cunning little fellow voo have de great deal " mush glass to sell, he cry—bravo! " bravo! bravissimo!—Den dey go to " vone—two—twenty more places, and " dey break all de vindows dere, too: " and de cunning little fellow he encore " de bravo! again and again. And den, " in vone—two—tree days, he have great " mush vindows to mend, vid de glass in " his shop; so he get great deal of monies " for avising *Monseigneur Johnny Bull* " and his friends to do de grand someting " to insure dere immortalite in de historique of de liberties of de peoples of " de great City du Vestminster.—Den " you see de big Life-Guards, and de " little Hussars, how, enrage, dey gallop " up and down, in terrible passion, after " de flying mut, and de little brick de

" bats; vile *Monseigneur Johnny Bull* " and his friends, amuse demselves vid de " picking up de great stones, here and " dere, dat de foot of de horse may tread " de *softer;* and de big Life-Guards and " de little Hussars, may tumble down de " more *easily,* ven dey get de little knock " on de head vid de big stones dat be " pick up from de street for de purpose.— " Den you see de grand attack en mili- " taire! vere de regiment du Guards do " batter de kishen-window, en breashe, " den enter de castle pell-mell; and, " taking de young gentilhomme from de " corner of de closet, gallop up Bond " Street to de Hill *Decapitation,* vere he " have de little snug apartments in de " North Tower.—And he vill be good " young gentilhomme, and no do pah— " pah tings; nor sing—*Call again to-* " *morrow,* to de grand serjeant, any

"more.—And here I will beg de per-
"mission to drop de curtain over de two
"times grand scene of God de blesse his
"Majesty's Jubilee Year!"

Again making use of his cambric handkerchief, and again pulling a cord at the bottom of the show-box, *Monsieur Montefiasco* proceeded—full as loud as before.
"—Dere, ladies and gentilhommes, you
"have vone grand view of de Abbey du
"Vestminster, and de Yard du Palais.—
"Dere you see de grand gentilhommes,
"how dey have de consultation to know
"if de young gentilhomme be taken en
"verite.—How he be taken—why he be
"taken—and vat he be angry for, and
"tretten to send dem all to de transpor-
"tation, because he be taken.—Dere you
"see some gentilhommes of de grand de-

"partments, dey begin de grand con-
"sultation; and dey say great deal
"much visdom; and every body hear
"dem, because dey be of de grand de-
"partments.—Den you see de gentil-
"hommes of no grand departments; dey
"speak great deal mush visdom, too; but
"every body no hear dem quite so vell,
"cause dey have great deal time to spare,
"and ver little few good tings to give
"away.—Den you see de grand officere,
"Colonel de Liberte, how he get up, and
"he make every body look about dem.
"He tell dem dat dey know noting about
"mush visdom—dat dey have do noting
"at all; and dat dey never vill do noting
"at all!—Den he tell anotre story, vid
"mush visdom and eloquence—he say
"dey have know great deal, and dey have
"do great deal.—Dat de gentilhommes of
"de grand departments, dey have ruin de

" fine country! And de gentilhommes of " de no grand departments, dey have ruin " de fine country, too.—O de poor two " times ruinated country!—Den he say " dat dey can't do any ting to de young " gentilhommes; dat dey must not do " any ting; and dat dey dare not do any " ting to him.—Den he look all round, " and he say, dey have no got half so " great mush visdom de politique as him- " self; vish bring de popularite to de " heart, and de l'Argent to de pocket, " into de bargain.—Den de grand gentil- " hommes dey all cry, hear! hear! hear! " and dey laugh little very heartily, at de " funny little speech.—Den you see ano- " tre grand gentilhomme; he say great " deal about de consultation vish vas ne- " cessary to be go into. He tell dem dat " dey be de greatest gentilhommes in all " de vorld!—greater dan de king; God

" de bless his majesty! Or Napoleon de " grand, and no bless him at all.—Den " dey cry, hear! hear! hear! and dey " laugh little again.—Den dey look vid " de countenance du vinegar at de Colonel " de Liberte; and all pull at de vone end " of de fine cord du silk, and pull great " big majority over vid dem. So de " Colonel de Liberte, and his ver few " friends, dey look a little—vat you call— " down in de mout; and dey valk avay " ver majestique. And den all de grand " gentilhommes, dey make haste to look " about for security—vat you call—bail— " to be all attention if my *Lord de King-* " *Bench*, and de jury gentilhommes, " should vant to send dem all to de *Bay* " *de Botanique*, for making de grand " guards batter de kishen vindow en " breashe, den enter de castle pell-mell, " and taking de young gentilhomme from

" de corner of de closet—gallop up Bond " Street to de *Hill de Capitation*, and " put him in de little snug apartments in " de North Tower; vere he be ver good, " and do noting pah—pah—at all.

" Den you see *Monseigneur Johnny* " *Bull* and his friends, how de all parade " in grand spectacle, on de *Hill Capita-* " *tion;* and look a little en sable for be " upon de land ven dey should all have be " in de vater! So dey all marsh in pro- " cession ver sulky, vid de pretty little " empty phaeton for de peoples to pull off " dere hats and cry huzza to, all de vay " to Piccadilly! So, ven de grand orator " from de Newgate, he have make his " fine oration, dey all go home—la, la! " Den dey tell dere vives dat dey have " got de toot-ake, so can't talk about de " ver grand procession, vid de little empty

" phaeton, until—*Call again to-morrow!*
" —Den you see de big Life-Guards and
" de little Hussars, dey gallop all—de
" *prime—de bang-up!* all de vay to dere
" barracks; ver glad dat de fun and de
" frolique of de grand corps du patriote,
" to promote de felicite of der gracious
" sovereign, and de peace and harmony of
" de empire Britannique, was all over,
" and quite finale. And here I vill beg
" de permission to drop de curtain over
" de tree times grand scene, of God de
" bless his Majesty's Jubilee Year!—and
" God de bless de king, and de family
" royal; also, de von—two—ten thou-
" sand times! Amen! But, in de few
" weeks, ladies and gentilhommes, I have
" de flattery to be able to represent vone
" —two more grand scenes, now in—vat
" you call—de petto: and vish I vill take
" care to perform vid de same regard en

"verite as I have now had de honour to
"perform before you."

The show being over, and the gentlemen liberated, they soon hastened to Grosvenor Square, where they were under the necessity of giving an ample relation of all that they had heard and seen, before they could thoroughly reconcile the ladies to the delay they had occasioned; and to the consequent detriment which the dinner must have sustained by being kept back full three quarters of an hour. Nor, even then, do we know what punishment would have been inflicted on poor *Montefiasco*, had the ladies been absolute.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW SELDOM ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF SANQUINE PERSONS ANSWERED!

As it may readily be supposed that the ladies were anxious to get to the theatre, it will not appear surprising that they should have evinced evident symptoms of eagerness to be gone as soon as the dinner was over; it being then near six o'clock. "Ha!" cried the earl—"I see you are "like the rest of the children—want to "be at the first scene of the play as well

"as the last. Well! in hope of a good "supper we will indulge you; and take "you by the hand before our dinner is "well swallowed.—What say you, Sir "William?"

"Yes, yes! all the *canterings*, *capers*, "and *curvettes*, were certainly performed "with the wrong foot foremost; of course "the little horse must have been badly "broke; or stupid grooms have trained "him badly since"—said the baronet, who was thinking of the *topsy-turvy* gentlemen and the little *sorrel horse* which he had just seen. The ladies could not help rallying him on—*his wrong foot foremost*; when all rising from the table, they were soon on their way to the theatre.

"Curse the mobility!" cried Sir Wil-

liam, as the box-keeper was opening the door of the box in which the places were taken.—" What a cruel thing it is that " we cannot have a private box to lounge " in !—Heavens !—why the overture is " only beginning !—Don't let us enter yet, " ladies. We shan't be able to disturb a " single *soul* in getting to our places ; nor " attract the attention of an individual in " the whole house, by creeping in at such " an hour."

" That I deny," said *Cato*, from the identical box—" as you have already at- " tracted our attention, Sir William ; and " we, of course, are happy to be *disturbed* " by so amiable a party !"

The sound of the voice, even of *Cato the Censor*, so wholly absorbed that of the overture, that giving each other a

congratulating squeeze of the hand, on the auspicious prospect of speedily having their curiosity satisfied, as to the enigma of the *Marchioness de Piomberti*, they instantly gave another to the gentlemen; and glowing with a vermeille suffusion, on receiving the usual respectful salutation of *Juba*, they took their seats—actually admired by the whole house.

As the overture was nearly over by the time the ladies had seated themselves, being ever anxious to hear the whole of a favourite performance, they, of course, did not deem it either polite or politic to disturb others; so found it impossible to arrive at an ecclaircissement before the rising of the curtain. The lovely pair, therefore, were obliged to summon patience to their aid; and, by sometimes catching a glance at young *Juba*—sometimes look-

ing at the performers; and, sometimes, endeavouring to anticipate the information which they were so desirous of receiving; they did contrive to get through an hour, in little more than the apparent interval of a year.—Such is the effect of anxiety on tender minds.

The usual question of—"Well, ladies, "how have you been entertained?" being put by *Cato*, the ladies looked at each other. Eliza felt herself unable to speak at the instant; but Lady Harriett having somewhat less at the heart, and her tongue not so very strictly embargoed, did make exertion sufficient to say—"Really, Sir, my mind was so totally "occupied by that enchanting Marchio-"ness de Piomberti, that, at present, I "am unprepared with an answer to your "question. Pray how is the amiable lady?"

"She was quite recovered yesterday "morning, my lady, and actually going "to venture on an excursion in her car- "riage, when my servant was there; and "such being the state of her health so "recently, we did not feel it necessary to "make any inquiry to-day."

"We did not feel it necessary," were words of two much importance, even from the cynical gentleman, to be thrown away; on the contrary, they were treasured up in the memory, as matter to be duly examined hereafter: and her ladyship having given a short account of the visit of the amiable marchioness, ventured to observe, that, being a total stranger to her and her friends, they were at a loss to solve the mysterious allusions as to owing the speedy aid of him, and his young friend, to their influence. The

words were evidently addressed, *with the eye*, to both the gentlemen; therefore, the ladies were delighted, though not much surprised, on observing *Juba* catch the opportunity of replying.

"Ladies possessed of humanity and "benevolence, in a degree so copious, "and so truly interesting, may well forget when sentiments of such amiable "nature escape them. But, I trust, it "will not appear surprising, that they "should make some impression on my "memory. You will please to recollect, "ladies, (and *Juba* cast a significant look "at *Eliza)* when a similar accident oc-"curred some weeks ago, and the unfor-"tunate person was lost, without any ex-"ertion being made to recover her, be-"cause the body was recognised as *poor* "and *degenerate;* on the circumstance

" being mentioned, in this very theatre, " you honoured the poor creature with a " sigh, which might have recompensed a " *hero* for a life of glory! and sincerely re- " gretted that you were not present; for, " being *poor*, the claim, which ought to " have been universal, should have had " its full weight with you! and, if *dege-* " *nerate*, the preservation of her life was " of ten-fold consequence; as, most pro- " bably, more sinned against than sin- " ning, had she been recovered, she might " have repented; and, at a good old age, " have expired with hope of forgiveness " from that *All-merciful Being*, who, as " you feared, would have but too much " to pardon in us all! After having once " heard observations so truly amiable and " philanthropic, it was not likely that " we should very soon forget them; so " happening to hear of the recent acci-

" dent, just as we were sauntering towards
" the park, we eagerly hastened to the
" spot, in hope of preserving an unfortu-
" nate fellow creature."

Such a speech, and spoken by such a person, could not fail to please the ladies; the *one* from knowing herself to have been the author of the sentiments recited; the *other*, from fancying that it was she who spoke it; though it had escaped her memory:—and, as the second act was then beginning, they listened to the performers with complacency, and judged with good humour.

Two of the *lobby-loungers* having unfortunately *floundered* from their natural *element*, into the front row of the box next to that in which our party was seated, contrived to attract the attention of the

house so warmly, to a state apparently tormenting to themselves, and actually tormenting to their neighbours, that *Fawcett* had mounted the *broom*, and ridden off in the *farce*, before they had an opportunity of speaking of the merits of the performers. Then, indeed, when all the house had been, for the twentieth time, convulsed with laughter, at the quaint, dry, matchless, *boatswain* of *Munden*, and the broad, irresistible, risible, *attorney*, of *Fawcett*; the attention of the ladies were roused by *Cato*; who, in his usual half-acrimonious way, said—" There!—
" ladies;—there! Now, I hope, you are
" satisfied, that, what I have frequently
" hinted, relative to your two *male* fa-
" vourites, is founded on fact. At this
" instant I can count no less than nine
" *dentists* of eminence in the boxes!—
" and, by the great satisfaction expressed

" in their countenances, I shall not be " surprised if their committee are *wise* " enough to send their grand *providores* " of the opera and farce, a hamper of " wine each, to-morrow or next day!"

" A hamper of wine each!—why send " a hamper of wine each to *Munden* and " *Fawcett* in particular?" said the ladies.

" Why!" he returned—" Why, to " pamper their *gouty* symptoms, to be " sure, ladies; for compelling so many " old women to have *new sets of teeth* " the next time they come to the play to " see their performances; that knowing " they must laugh hysterically, whether " they will or not, they may avoid ex- " posing the ravages which nature has " made in a part of the face so univer- " sally the object of attention."

The ladies actually laughed *hysterically* at the oddity of the remark, and declared, that they should feel happy in treating those gentlemen with a glass of wine themselves, for the frequent pleasure which they had enjoyed while beholding comic performers so truly inimitable. Nor had they been entertained *a little*, by the hearty, hale, old veteran, performed by *Mr. Blanchard;* in which cast of characters that gentleman stands unequalled.

"It was lucky for us," said Eliza—"that the charming duett—*All's well!*—"was encored; or, through the vociferous *conversatione* in the next box, we "should have lost that treat entirely."

"*Bellamy* sang *Braham's* part exceedingly well," observed Lady Harriett—

"and, by not dressing his songs quite so
"gaudily, made them appear more na-
"tural, as well as more pleasing; nor
"did the tuneful voice and judicious taste
"of *Mr. Taylor*, suffer us, for a moment,
"to repine at the absence of the original
"performer of that part."

"Your ladyship is perfectly right," said *Juba*—"and I really think, that *Incle-*
"*don's* voice was as fine as I recollect
"ever to have heard it."

"*Incledon's* voice," observed *Cato*, "if
"not made too free with, will stand for
"many years, for it is naturally good;
"though, unfortunately, it so happens,
"with *bon vivants*, that, after *forty*,
"voices naturally excellent, require some
"nursing. Those, *self-made*, may be
"*tinkered* up with any *nostrum* when

"they are a little *cracked,* or out of
"order: and, indeed, trifling defects are
"not much noticed in *them*; as we gene-
"rally look more for modern *taste* and
"*execution* (as gallopping up and down
"the *gamut* are now called) than for
"sweetness of tone; but, with a fine,
"clear, melodious, voice, it is far other-
"wise:—there, when Nature perceives
"herself outraged, she readily resents the
"insult, and will be gently soothed ere
"she again is reconciled; in fact, that
"gentlemen, in gratitude to a generous
"public, which has ever greeted him with
"unreserved applause, as well as in duty
"to himself and family, is bound to be
"careful of his voice—for though, with
"much difficulty, we did find excellent
"substitutes for a *Lewis* and a *King*, in
"*Mr. Jones* and *Mr. Lovegrove*, I am

" afraid we should look a long while for
" another *Incledon.*"

" I had entertained some hopes that
" we should have seen *Mrs. H. Johnson,*
" to night," said Lady Harriett—" as I
" am very partial to her performances in
" general."

" I do not wonder at it, my lady," returned *Cato,* " for, in *Mrs. Johnson,*
" you view a most elegant woman; and a
" performer not less eminent than interesting and impressive."

" There certainly is somewhat extremely
" fascinating in that lady," observed *Juba*
—" and so our authors seem to think, by
" keeping her in their eye so attentively
" while writing for a theatre, in which
" she is a star of such brilliant attraction,

"that the more she is seen, the more "highly is the audience gratified."

"Nor must we forget *Emery*, ladies," said *Cato*—" who certainly is a *child of* "*Nature*, and the best Yorkshire lad on "the stage except *Knight*; and though I "have often attended to those young men "with a scrutinizing eye, I cannot deter-"mine the point of excellence between "them; except that I think *Emery* has "more of the *Munden*; and *Knight*, "when serious, more of my old friend, the "late *Tom Weston*, who threw many into "*hysterics* of laughter."

"Hysterics!" exclaimed Sir William, who had selected that word from the sentence—" Indeed! poor thing! Where is "she?"—And tapping one of the *uneasy gentlemen*, in the adjoining box, on the

shoulder, proceeded—"Surely, Sir Tho-"mas Dwindle, you have not thrown the "lady into hysterics—by saying *a good* "*thing!*"

"No; I'll be d——d if he has!" roared a surly-looking butcher in the pit, who had been a *little* prevented from hearing some of his favourite comic songs—"for "*he* and the *gemman* next to him "have been talking these two hours; and, "by G—d! my dog, here, could have "said more to the purpose by half!"—The dog, no doubt by instinct, feeling the force of his master's compliment, leaped up—licked his face, and wagged his tail!—to the infinite diversion o fall who were near the scene! and, let it once be recorded, to the evident confusion of two of the most high-mettled *loungers* on the *ton!*

It is unnecessary to observe, that, after such an extra scene, so excellently performed, and concluded at the moment of dropping the curtain, our party retired, tolerably well pleased with their share of the entertainments of the evening.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL RECONCILER OF CONTRADICTIONS IS FLATTERY!

"THE more I see of our *two* theatrical "friends," said Lady Harriett, immediately after the earl and Sir William had taken their leave—"the more I am con"vinced—or, to speak with due con"sideration, the more I am inclined to "suspect, they have no further interest "in seeking our company, at public

"places, than merely to amuse themselves with our conversation; or, surely they would be rather more particular. Certainly their company is very agreeable; and even the cynical remarks of *Cato*, are not without some traits of the pleasant in them. But, I think, *Juba* kept himself more in the back-ground than usual this evening, after having made his flattering speech. For my part, I could not get a single look at him, without absolutely turning myself half round for the purpose—and that had so awkward an appearance!

"Why, I, my dear Lady Harriet, sometimes entertained similar ideas respecting that gentleman," said Eliza, who was actually committing the same kind of behaviour, under pretence of adjusting her head-dress at the glass; but, in fact,

to elude the discovery of a half-conscious suffusion. For, it had so happened, the more the young gentleman had drawn back behind Lady Harriett, the more easily he became visible to *her;* and she had actually caught him, several times, in the very act of gazing on her most attentively; but instantly withdrew his eyes the moment he found himself observed. Such conduct, corroborated by the observations of her amiable friend, gave her some slight cause to suspect a kind of prepossession in her favour; and she was half-conscious of impropriety of conduct, in not revealing those observations to her ladyship.

"It is evident," said Lady Harriett, "that *neither* of the gentlemen (*Cato* "did not appear to be more than fifty) can "entertain any thing like a *tendre* for the

" Marchioness de Piomberti, by not hav-
" thought it *necessary to make enquiry*
" *after her health to day, because she*
" *was nearly recovered yesterday!* which,
" by the bye, does not evince a flight of
" politeness of very high soaring—accord-
" ing to my ideas of the polite world."

" Possibly they may have their *reasons*
" for so doing, my lady, which, if known
" to us, might justify them in our opinion.
" —For instance, *they* may not be partial
" to *foreigners*, though strictly civil; or,
" the family of the marchioness may be
" of too high quality to permit them,
" with due deference and respect, to make
" more enquiries then are absolutely ne-
" cessary."—The entrance of the servant, with candles, put an end to the conversation; and they retired to their chamber; where, a few preparatory *yawns*,

while undressing, gave each an excellent pretext for early apparent sleeping, in order to indulge in mental reflections on the occurrences of the evening.

"They may not be partial to *foreigners*, "though strictly civil."—This sentence of her lovely friend, recurred to Lady Harriett very soon after she had adjusted her head to the easiest part of her pillow; for, strange to tell! however improbable it may appear to those industrious daughters of *John Bull*, who have so little time to spare before they go to sleep, that the exact degree of softness, or regularity of the pillow, is no great object to them; there are many Lady Harriett's—Lady Belles—and Lady Bridgets, too, who, having nothing else to do, are apt to *pamper* and *pet* that little animated *arti-*

cle in the centre of their bosoms, until its *whimsies* and *vagaries* render them so irritable, that a misplaced feather will annoy them more than many would experience who had no feathers at all to sleep on; therefore, after having adjusted her head, which was not in the most eligible of modes, Lady Harriett mentally repeated the sentence three times over.— "It may be so," thought her ladyship— "they may not be partial to foreigners; "or the family of the marchioness may "be of too high quality to authorise more "enquiries than are absolutely necessary. "It may be so! The marchioness, most "certainly, is a very fine woman: but "her figure may be rather too tall to "meet the approbation of every one; and "many gentlemen, even in my hearing, "have expressed a kind of disgust at a "*brunette*, however delicately arranged

" the features may have been:—her eyes " too, black and brilliant as they are, do " not attract that warm admiring gaze, " which I have sometimes seen the *British* " *blue* occasion."—(And her ladyship actually winked her closed *blue eyes* at the same instant.) " No, no! 'tis the mid-" dle-size that sooths the *gentle gaze*—if " not the stare of wonder: and the genuine " charms of English *red* and *white* will " oftentimes secure the fickle heart which " has roamed through all the foreign " climes, and seen their *belles* unmoved!" O, Flattery! Flattery! what a *honied article* art thou!—Of universal influence! Thy presence is as necessary, and as soothing, to the veriest *beggar* in St. Giles's as to *Napoleon*, when seated on the throne of Europe, and each leg of his foot-stool supported by the body of a *ruined king!* Nay, so essential art thou to our happi-

ness, on the spur of the occasion, that, if thou art not near, or ready made, rather than want thee long, we turn *Creators*, and make thee up ourselves! Thus, by thy pleasing aid, compounded by herself, did Lady Harriett render the form, features, and complexion, of the Marchioness de Piomberti of no avail: and the *middle-size*—the *eyes of British blue*—and the complexion of an *animating red and white*—(all which she knew that she possessed) as carrying all before them! and leaving the *belles* of foreign *climes*, to be barely seen in the back-ground!

With equal ease, by the help of the self-same *honied-article*, did Lady Harriett get over the other part of Eliza's sentence—as to the family of the marchioness being too high, and so forth; for, as to the family—*that was neither here nor*

there. If of too high quality for the gentlemen, it certainly portended that the quality of the gentleman must be somewhat inferior. But what of that? Though they might not be *princes* and *dukes,* their deportment and conversation constituted them gentlemen; and none but gentlemen of fortune could afford to attend all the public places—with no other visible motive but to converse with them! That, if *their* fortunes were not so very capital, as, no doubt, *their* characters would bear the strictest investigation, her fortune would make amends for any little deficiency on *his* part; and, where there are *tolerable persons,* decent *fortunes,* and mutual *affection,* there must be strange vicissitudes, indeed, if such *people* are not happy!—That, as to Sir William Vacant—here the abrupt obtrusion of a feather, made her ladyship turn

suddenly on her pillow; and the pleasing thread of her thoughts being snapped by the suddenness of the motion, she could not again arrange them *agreeably* before she dropped in a doze; when she dreamt of seeing the baronet stand by her side, with a flaming sword, threatening destruction to all who should approach her.

On the other hand, Eliza's portion of the mental contemplation, was not so pleasantly got over. She certainly evinced herself a very tolerable manufacturer of the *honied article*, in which Lady Harriett had so much excelled. She adjusted the not being partial to foreigners, and the high quality of the Marchioness, with nearly as much ease, as her ladyship had accomplished those weighty matters. But there was one awkward stumbling-block which she could not readily get over.

She had, with the utmost facility, convinced *herself*, that the gentlemen were gentlemen; and that their appearance—the company they kept—and the frequenting public-places, purely to enjoy their *company and conversation*, evidently proved them to be, also, gentlemen of fortune. But if *they* should not be possessed of *immense riches*:—if *their* characters were irreproachable, though *their* fortunes should prove but moderate, she had no right to push felicity aside on that account!—For, having but a small fortune herself, she could not fairly object to a moderate fortune in the *person* who should solicit her hand. Nor could she see what objection any of her friends could make to the *match*. Lady Harriett, she was sure, would—here a presumptuous *feather* protruded itself from *her* pillow, also, and, touching the tip of her pretty nose, com-

pelled her to turn on the instant. Her turning, however, turned out still worse than that of Lady Harriett; for, in spite of all her efforts to reconcile contradictions, she had soon, in idea, committed herself with her amiable friend; and opened the sad sources of sighs and tears, so copiously, that, in a mental paroxysm of complaints and revilings, she sank into a slumber, when she soon had to encounter —" *gorgons* and *hydras*, and *chimeras* " dire!"

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